

THE
WORKS
OF
JAMES HERVEY, A. M.

LATE RECTOR OF WESTON-PAVELL,

In Northamptonshire

Vol. 5.

CONTAINING

ELEVEN LETTERS

TO THE

Reverend Mr. JOHN WESLEY:

WITH

An Answer to that Gentleman's Remarks on *THE* ~~REASON~~ *REASON*

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DON; AND J. STAFFORD, OF BINGHAM.

1803.



PREFACE.

THE following letters were written by my late Brother in answer to a piece, which was first sent him from the Rev. Mr. JOHN WESLEY, by way of private letter, containing some remarks which that Gentleman had made on reading *THE FROW AND ASPASIO*. When my Brother had read it over, he thought it best to be silent, as it contained nothing which could materially affect his judgement in regard to the work it censured: for this reason, as well as for peace sake, he laid it by him unanswered.—MR. WESLEY then published a pamphlet, which he entitled, “A preservative against unsettled Notions in Religion;” in which, he printed the above-mentioned letter.

This my Brother looked upon as a summons to the bar of the public, and upon this occasion, in a letter to a friend, dated June 23. 1758, writes as follows.

[“ My dear Friend,

“ I little thought, when I put Mr. WESLEY's manuscript in your hand, that I should see it in print so soon. I took very little notice of it, and let it lie by me several months, without giving it an attentive consideration*. It seemed to me so palpably weak, dealing only in positive assertions and positive denials, that I could not imagine he would adventure it into the world, without very great alterations. But it is now come abroad, just as you received it, in a two shillings Pamphlet, entitled, *A preservative against unsettled Notions in Religion*. Of this Pamphlet what he has wrote against me, makes only a small part. Now then the ques-

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* Afterwards he read it again, and gave it what he calls in the beginning of the first letter, “ a careful perusal.”

PREFACE.

"tion is, whether I shall attempt to answer it? Give ~~the~~ your opinion, as you have given me your assistance, and may the Father of mercies give you an increase of knowledge and utterance, of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Between this and the October following, my brother began the letters contained in this volume, of which he thus speaks in another letter to his friend, dated October 14, 1793.

[" My dear Friend,

" Let me repeat my thanks for the trouble you have taken, and for the assistance you have given me in relation to my controversy with Mr. Wesley, his conduct in his relations, and to manifest in his manner, that I find it not a difficult duty, to preserve the decency of the gentleman and the necessity of the christian, in my intended answer. I have given some time in both these instances, or else not until I was well at last."

When, in the December following, I was sent for to Winton, in the very last period of my brother's long illness - I took him up, and even though I asked "What he would have done with the letters to Mr. Wesley, whether he would have then published after his death - He answered - By no means, because he had only transcribed about half of them fair for the press, but the corrections and alterations of the latter part were mostly in short hand, it would be difficult to understand them, especially as some of the short-hand was entirely his own, and others could not make it out; therefore, he said, as it is not a unified piece, I do not you will think no more about it."

As these were his last orders concerning these letters, I thought it right to obey them, and therefore I withstood the repeated solicitations of many of his friends, who wanted to have them printed, acknowledging the fear that they might be or to allay the groundless prejudices which the press have multiplied even in the hands of many, against my Brother's other writings, as well as the utility of them in general, as they contain so materially a refutation of the truth as it is in J. L. S. S. S.

But notwithstanding this, and for the persons who so loved and valued him, I could not help to send to print the letters; and as they had appeared in public with my consent, had not a few anonymous Editors of them lately made a way from the press, as we say, I was under a firm persuasion that it will be followed by more.

PREFACE.

As this is the case, I think it my duty to the memory of my late Brother, to send forth as correct an edition as I possibly can; for as to that which has appeared (from what Editor I know not) it is so faulty, and incorrect, that but little judgement can be formed from it, of the propriety and force of my Brother's answers to Mr. Wesley.

As to the unfairness of publishing my Brother's letters without my consent, and the injustice to his memory, in sending so mangled a performance out under his name, they are too apparent to need any proof, and though the Editor, as I have been informed, gave away the whole impression, so that it is plain, lucre was not the motive of his proceeding, and I would charitably hope he did it with a view of benefiting his readers, yet it is so like doing evil, that good may come, as, in my opinion, to be quite unjustifiable.

However, as the only way now left to remedy in some sort what has been done, and to prevent a further impetion on the public, from worse motives than actuated this Publisher, I have called a friend to my assistance, and by this means, present the reader with as perfect a copy of these letters, as can possibly be made out from the original manuscript now in my hands.

That the reader may judge more clearly of the state of the controversy between my late Brother and Mr. Wesley, I have thought it right to subjoin Mr. Wesley's letter, word for word, as it stands in the prefervative.





A Letter to the Reverend Mr.—

DEAR SIR,

A Considerable time since I sent you a few hasty thoughts, which occur'd to me on reading the dialogues between Theron and Aspasius. I have not been favour'd with any answer. Yet upon another and a more careful perusal of them, I could not but set down some obvious reflections, which I would rather have communicated, before those dialogues were publish'd.

In the first, I observe there are several just and strong observations, which may be of use to every serious reader. In the second, is not the description often too laboured, the language too stuff, and affected? Yet the reflections on the creation (on the 31st and following pages) make abundant amends for this. (I cite the pages according to the Dublin edition, having wrote the rough draught of what follows, in Ireland.)

P. 39. Is justification more or less, than God's pardoning and accepting a sinner through the merits of Christ? That God herein "reckons the righteousness and obedience which Christ performed as our own:" I allow, if by that ambiguous expression, you mean only as you here explain it yourself, "they are as effectual for obtaining our salvation as if they were our own personal qualifications." P. 41.

P. 43. "We are not solicitous, as to any particular set of phrases. Only let men be humbled, as repenting criminals

at Christ's feet, let them rely as devoted pensioners on his merits, and they are undoubtedly in the way to a blissful immortality." Then for Christ's sake, and for the sake of the immortal souls which he has purchased with his blood, do not dispute for that particular phrase, the imputed righteousness of Christ. It is not scriptural, it is not necessary. Men who scruple to use, men who never heard the expression, may yet "be humbled, as repenting criminals at his feet, and rely as devoted pensioners on his merits." But it has done immense hurt. I have had abundant proof, that the frequent use of this unnecessary phrase, instead of "furthering mens progress in vital holiness," has made them satisfied without any holiness at all; yea and encouraged them to work all uncleanness with greediness.

P. 45. "To ascribe pardon to Christ's passive, eternal life to his active righteousness, is fanciful rather than judicious. His universal obedience from his birth to his death, is the one foundation of my hope."

This is unquestionably right. But if it be, there is no manner of need, to make the imputation of his active righteousness, a separate and laboured head of discourse. O that you had been content with this plain scriptural account, and spared some of the dialogues and letters that follow!

The third and fourth dialogues contain an admirable illustration and confirmation of the great doctrine of Christ's satisfaction. Yet even here I observe a few passages, which are liable to some exception.

P. 54. "SATISFACTION was made to the divine law." I do not remember any such expression in scripture. This way of speaking of the law as a person injured and to be satisfied, seems hardly defensible.

P. 74. "THE death of Christ procured the pardon and acceptance of believers, even before he came in the flesh." Yea, and ever since. In this we all agree. And why should we contend for any thing more?

P. 120. "ALL the benefits of the new covenant, are the purchase of his blood." Surely they are. And after this has been fully proved, where is the need, where is the use, of contending so strenuously, for the imputation of his righteousness, as is done in the fifth and sixth dialogues?

P. 135. "If he was our substitute as to penal sufferings, why not, as to justifying obedience?"

The former is expressly asserted in scripture. The latter is not expressly asserted there.

P. 145. "As sin and misery have abounded through the first Adam, mercy and grace have much more abounded through the second." So that none can have any reason to complain." No, not if the second Adam died for all. Otherwise all for whom he did not die, have great reason to complain. For they inevitably fall by the first Adam, without any help from the second.

P. 148. "The whole world of believers" is an expression which never occurs in scripture. nor has it any countenance there; the world in the inspired writings being constantly taken either in an universal or in a bad sense; either for the whole of mankind, or for that part of them who know not God.

P. 149. "In the Lord shall all the house of Israel be justified." It ought unquestionably to be rendered, "by or through the Lord:" this argument therefore proves nothing. "Ye are complete in him." The words literally rendered, are, ye are filled with him. And the whole passage, as any unprejudiced reader may observe, relates to sanctification, not justification.

P. 150. "They are accepted for Christ's sake; this is justification through imputed righteousness." That remains to be proved; many allow the former, who cannot allow the latter.

Theron. "I see no occasion for such nice distinctions and metaphysical subtleties.

Asp. You oblige us to make use of them by confounding these very different ideas, that is, Christ's active and passive righteousness."

I ANSWER, we do not confound these: but neither do we separate them. Nor have we any authority from scripture, for either thinking or speaking of one separate from the other. And this whose debate on one of them, separate from the other, is a mere metaphysical subtlety.

P. 151. "The righteousness which justifies us, is already wrought out." A crude, unscriptural expression! "it was

set on foot, carried on, compleated."—O vain philosophy! the plain truth is, Christ lived and tasted death for every man. And through the merits of His life and death, every believer is justified.

P. 152. "WHOEVER preverts so glorious a doctrine, shows he never believed." Not so. Many who turn back as a dog to the vomit, had once escaped the pollutions of the world by the knowledge of Christ.

P. 153. "THE goodness of God leadeth to repentance." This is unquestionably true. But the nice, metaphysical doctrine of imputed righteousness, leads not to repentance, but to licentiousness.

P. 154. "THE believer cannot but add to his faith, works of righteousness." During his first love, this is often true. But it is not true afterwards, as we know and feel by melancholy experience.

P. 155. "WE no longer obey, in order to lay the foundation for our final acceptance." No: that foundation is already laid in the merits of Christ. Yet we obey, in order to our final acceptance through his merits. And in this sense, by obeying we lay a good foundation, that we may attain eternal life.

P. 156. "WE establish the law: we provide for its honor, by the perfect obedience of Christ." Can you possibly think St. Paul meant this? That such a thought ever entered into his mind? The plain meaning is, we establish both the true sense and the effectual practice of it: we provide for its being both understood and practised in its full extent.

P. 157. "ON those who reject the atonement, just severity." Was it ever possible for them, not to reject it? If not, how is it just, to cast them into a lake of fire, for not doing what it was impossible they should do? Would it be just in (it your own case) to cast you into hell, for not doing what you were unable to do with your hand?

P. 159, "JUSTIFICATION is complete the first moment we believe, and is incapable of augmentation."

Nor so: there may be as many degrees in the favor as in the image of God.

P. 190. "St. PAUL often mentions a righteousness imputed: (not a righteousness; never once; but simply righteousness.) "What can this be, but the righteousness of Christ?" He tells you himself, Rom. iv. 6. To him that believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, faith is imputed for righteousness. "Why? Christ stiled Jehovah our righteousness?" Because we are both justified and sanctified through him.

P. 191. "My death, the cause of their forgiveness; my righteousness, the ground of their acceptance."

How does this agree with P. 189? "To ascribe pardon to Christ's passion, and to his active righteousness, is fanciful rather than pious."

P. 195. "He commends such kinds of beneficence only, as were exercised to a principle as such." Is not this a sign of the pen? Will not our Lord then commend, and reward eternally, all kinds of beneficence, provided they flow'd from a principle of loving faith? Yea, that which was exercised to a Samaritan, a Jew, a Turk or an Heathen? Even these I would not term "transient bubbles," though they do not procure our justification.

P. 197. "How must our righteousness exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees? Not only in being sincere, but in possessing a complete righteousness, even that of Christ." Did our Lord mean this? Nothing less. He specifies in the following parts of his sermon, the very instances wherein the righteousness of a christian exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees.

P. 198. "He brings this specious hypocrite to the test." How does it appear, that he was an hypocrite? Our Lord gives not the least intimation of it. Surely he loved him, not for his hypocrisy, but his sincerity!

Yea he loved the world, and therefore could not keep any of the commandments in their spiritual meaning. And the keeping of these is undoubtedly the way to, though not the cause, of eternal life.

P. 200. "By works his faith was made perfect: appeared to be true." No: the natural sense of the word is,

by the grace superadded while he wrought those works, his faith was literally made perfect.

Ibid. "He that doeth righteousness is righteous—manifests the truth of his conversion." Nay; the plain meaning is, he alone is truly righteous, whose faith worketh by love.

P. 201. "St. JAMES speaks of the justification of our faith." Not unless you mean by that odd expression, our faith being made perfect: for so the Apostle explains his own meaning. Perhaps the word justified is once used by St. Paul for manifested.—But that does not prove, it is to be so understood here.

P. 202. "Whoso doeth these things, shall never fall into total apostasy." How pleasing to the flesh and blood! but David says no such thing. His meaning is, whoso doeth these things to the end, shall never fall into hell.

THE seventh dialogue is full of important truths. Yet some expressions in it I can't commend.

P. 216. "ONE thing thou lackest, the imputed righteousness of Christ." You cannot think, this is the meaning of the text. Certainly the one thing our LORD meant was, the love of God. This was the thing he lacked.

P. 222. "Is the obedience of Christ insufficient to accomplish our justification?" Rather I would ask, "is the death of Christ insufficient to purchase it?"

P. 226. "The saints in glory ascribe, the whole of their salvation to the blood of the lamb." So do I: and yet I believe he "obtained for all a possibility of salvation."

P. 227. "THE terms of acceptance for fallen man were a full satisfaction to the divine justice, and a complete conformity to the divine law." This you take for granted; but I cannot allow.

The terms of acceptance for fallen man are repentance and faith. Repent ye and believe the gospel.

Ibid. "There are but two methods whereby any can be justified, either by a perfect obedience to the law, or because Christ hath kept the law in our stead. You should say, "or by faith in Christ." I then answer, this is true. And fallen man is justified, not by perfect obedience but by faith. What Christ has done is the foundation of our justification, not the term or condition of it.

IN the eighth dialogue likewise there are many great truths, and yet some things liable to exception.

P. 253. "DAVID GOD himself dignifies with the most exalted of all characters." Far, very far from it. We have more exalted characters than David's, both in the old testament and the new. Such are those of Samuel, Daniel, yea and Job, in the former, of St. Paul and St. John in the latter.

"BUT God stiles him a man after his own heart." This is the text which has caused many to mistake: for want of considering, first, that this is said of David in a particular respect, not with regard to his whole character: secondly, the time, at which it was spoken. When was David a man after God's own heart? When God found him following the ewes great with young, when he took him from the sheep-folds, Ps. lxxix. 71. It was in the 2d or 3d year of Saul's reign, that Samuel said to him, the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and hath commanded him to be captain over his people. 1 Sam. xiii. 14. But was he a man after God's own heart all his life? Or in all particulars? So far from it, that we have few more exceptionable characters, among all the men of God recorded in scripture.

P. 261. "THERE is not a just man upon earth that sinneth not." Solomon might truly say so, before Christ came. And St. John might after he came say as truly, whosoever is born of God sinneth not. "But in many things we offend all." That St. James does not speak this of himself, or of real christians, will clearly appear, to all who impartially consider the context.

THE ninth dialogue, proves excellently well, that we cannot be justified by our works.

BUT have you thoroughly considered the words which occur in the 270th page?

"O CHILDREN of Adam, you are no longer obliged, to love God with all your strength, nor your neighbour as yourselves. Once indeed I insisted upon absolute purity of heart: now I can dispense with some degrees of evil desire. Since Christ — has fulfilled the law for you, you

need not fulfill it. I will connive at, yea accommodate my demands to your weakness."

I AGREE with you, that "this doctrine makes the holy one of God a minister of sin." And is it not your own? Is not this the very doctrine which you espouse throughout your book?

I CANNOT but except to several passages also in the tenth dialogue. I ask first.

P. 291. "Does the righteousness of God ever mean" (as you affirm) "the merits of Christ?" I believe not once in all the scripture. And particularly in the epistle to the Roman. Christ is the justifying sinners. When therefore you say

P. 292. "The righteousness of God means, such a righteousness as may justly challenge acceptance," I cannot allow it at all. And this capital mistake must needs lead you into many other. But I follow you step by step.

Ibid. "In order to entitle us to a reward, there must be an imputation of righteousness." There must be an interest in Christ. And then every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour.

P. 293. "A REBEL may be forgiven, without being restored to the dignity of a son." A rebel against an earthly King may; but not a rebel against God. In the very same moment that God forgives, we are the sons of God. Therefore this is an idle dispute. For pardon and acceptance, though they may be distinguished, cannot be divided. The words of Job which you cite are wide of the question. Those of Solomon prove no more than this, (and who denies it?) That justification implies both pardon and acceptance.

P. 225. "GRACE reigneth through righteousness unto eternal life,"—That is, the free love of God brings us through justification and sanctification to glory. Ibid. "that they may receive forgiveness and a lot among the sanctified:" that is, that they may receive pardon, holiness, heaven.

Ibid. "Is not the satisfaction made by the death of Christ, sufficient to obtain both our full pardon and final happiness?" Unquestionably it is, and neither of the texts you cite proves the contrary.

P. 296. "If it was requisite for Christ to be baptized, much more to fulfill the moral law."

I CANNOT prove that either the one or the other was requisite in order to his purchasing redemption for us.

P. 297. "By Christ's sufferings alone, the law was not satisfied." Yes it was; for it required only the alternative, obey or die. It required no man to obey and die too. If any man had perfectly obey'd, he would not have died. Ibid. "Where scripture ascribes the whole of our salvation to the death of Christ, a part of his humiliation is put for the whole." I cannot allow this without some proof. He was obeyed, and that is no proof at all; as it does not necessarily follow, that because he died in obedience to the father, that some texts there is a necessity of taking a part for the whole. But in these there is no such necessity.

P. 300. "CHRIST undertook to do every thing necessary for our redemption;" not by a covenant made with the father. 'Tis sure, he did every thing necessary: but how does it appear, that he undertook this, before the foundation of the world, and that by a positive covenant between him and the father?

You think this appears from four texts, 1. From that, thou givest them to me. Nay, when any believe, the father gives them to Christ. But this proves no such previous covenant. 2. God hath laid upon him the iniquities of us all. Neither does this prove any such thing. 3. That expression, the counsel of peace shall be between them, does not necessarily imply any more, than that both the father and the son would concur in the redemption of man. 4. According to the counsel of his will,—that is, in the way or method he had chosen. Therefore neither any of these texts, nor all of them, prove what they were brought to prove. They do by no means prove, that there ever was any such covenant made between the father and the son.

P. 301. "THE conditions of the covenant are recorded. Lo, I come to do thy will." Nay here is no mention of any covenant, nor any thing from which it can be interr'd. "the recompence stipulated in this glorious treaty."—But I see not one word of the treaty itself. Nor can I possibly

allow the existence of it without far other proof than this. *Ibid.* "Another copy of this grand treaty is recorded Isaiah xlix. from the first to the sixth verse." I have read them, but cannot find a word about it, in all those verses. They contain neither more nor less than a prediction, of the salvation of the Gentiles.

P. 302. "By the covenant of works, man was bound to obey in his own person." And so he is under the covenant of grace; though not in order to his justification.— "The obedience of our surety is accepted instead of our own." This is neither a safe nor a scriptural way of speaking. I would simply say, *we are accepted through the beloved. We have redemption through his blood.*

P. 303. The second covenant was not made with Adam, or any of his posterity, but with Christ in those words, *The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.* For any authority you have from these words, you might as well have said, it was made with the Holy Ghost. These words were not spoken to Christ, but of him, and give not the least intimation of any such covenant as you plead for. They manifestly contain, if not a covenant made with, a promise made to Adam and all his posterity.

P. 303. "CHRIST, we see, undertook to execute the conditions." We see no such thing in this text. We see here only a promise of a Saviour, made by God to man.

Ibid. "'Tis true, I cannot fulfil the conditions." 'Tis not true. The conditions of the new covenant are repent and believe. And there you can fulfil, through Christ strengthening you. "'Tis equally true, this is not required at my hands." It is equally true, that is, absolutely false. And most dangerously false. If we allow this, Antinomianism comes in with a full tide. "Christ has performed all that was conditional for me." Has he repented and believed for you? You endeavour to evade this by saying, "He performed all that was conditional in the covenant of works." This is nothing to the purpose; for we are not talking of that, but of the covenant of grace. Now he did not perform all that was conditional in this covenant, unless he repented and believed. "But he did unspeakably more." It may be so. But he did not do this,

P. 308. "But if Christ's perfect obedience be ours, we have no more need of pardon than Christ himself." The consequence is good. You have started an objection which you cannot answer. You say indeed, "Yes, we do need pardon; for in many things we offend all." What then? If his obedience be ours, we still perfectly obey in him.

P. 309. "Both the branches of the law, the preceptive and the penal, in the case of guilt contracted, must be satisfied," Not so. "Christ by his death alone, (so our church teaches) fully satisfied for the sins of the whole world." The same great truth is manifestly taught in the 31st article. Is it therefore fair, is it honest, for any one to plead the articles of our church in defence of absolute predestination? Seeing the 17th article barely defines the term, without either affirming or denying the thing; whereas the 31st totally overthrows and raises it from the foundation.

Ibid. "BELIEVERS who are notorious transgressors in themselves, have a sinless obedience in Christ." O Siren song! pleasing sound, to James Wheatley! Thomas Williams! James Reiley!

I know not one sentence in the eleventh dialogue, which is liable to exception: but that grand doctrine of christianity, original sin, is therein proved by irrefragable arguments.

THE twelfth likewise is unexceptionable, and contains such an illustration of the wisdom of God, in the structure of the human body, as I believe, cannot be paralleled, in either antient or modern writers.

THE former part of the thirteenth dialogue is admirable. To the latter I have some objection.

VOL. II. P. 44. "Elijah tailed in his resignation, and even Moses spake unadvisedly with his lips." It is true: but if you could likewise fix some blot upon venerable Samuel and beloved Daniel, it would prove nothing. For no scripture teaches, that the holiness of christians is to be measured by that of any Jew.

P. 46. "Do not the best of men frequently feel disorder in there affections? Do not they often complain, when I

would do good, evil is present with me?" I believe not. You and I are only able to answer for ourselves. "Do not they say, we groan being burden'd,—with the workings of inbred corruption?" You know, this is not the meaning of the text. The whole context shews the cause of that groaning was their longing to be with Christ.

P. 47. "THE cur" or sin "will be perfected in heaven." Nay surely. in paradise, if no sooner. "This is a noble prerogative of the beatific vision." No: It would then come too late. If sin remains in us 'till the day of judgment, it will remain for ever. "Our present blessedness does not consist in being free from sin." I really think it does. But whether it does or no, if we are not free from sin, we are not christian believers. For to all these the Apostle declares, being made free from sin, ye are become the servants of righteousness, Rom. vi. 18.

"If we were perfect in piety (St. John's word is, perfect in love) Christ's priestly office would be superseded." No: we should still need his spirit (and consequently his intercession) for the continuance of that love from moment to moment. Beside, we should still be encompassed with infirmities, and liable to mistakes, from which words or actions might follow, even though the heart was all love, which were not exactly right. Therefore in all these respects we should still have need of Christ's priestly office, and therefore as long as he remains in the body, the greatest saint may say,

Every moment, Lord, I need
The merit of thy death.

The text cited from Exodus asserts nothing less than, that iniquity "cleaves to all our holy things 'till death."

P. 48. "Sin remains, that the righteousness of faith may have its due honor." And will the righteousness of faith have its due honor no longer than sin remains in us? Then it must remain, not only on earth and in Paradise, but in heaven also—"and the sanctification of the spirit its proper esteem." Would it not have more esteem, if it were a perfect work?

"It (sin) will make us lowly in our own eyes." What, will pride make us lowly? Surely the utter destruction of pride, would do this more effectually. "It will make us compassionate." Would not an entire renewal in the image of God make us much more so? "It will teach us to admire the riches of grace." Yea, but a fuller experience of it, by a thorough sanctification of spirit, soul and body, will make us admire it more. "It will reconcile us to death." Indeed it will not: nor will any thing do this, like perfect love.

P 49. "It will endear the blood and intercession of Christ." Nay, these can never be so dear to any, as to those who experience their full virtue, who are filled with the fullness of God. Nor can any "feel their continual need" of Christ, or, "rely on him" in the manner which these do.

DIALOGUE 14. P. 57. "The claims of the law are all answered." If so, Count Zinzendorf is absolutely in the right: neither God nor man can claim any obedience to it. Is not this Antinomianism without a mark?

P. 59. "Your sins are expiated through the death of Christ, and a righteousness given you, by which you have free access to God." This is not scriptural language. I would simply say, *by him we have access to the Father.*

THERE are many other expressions in this Dialogue, to which I have the same objection, namely, 1. That they are unscriptural, 2. that they directly lead to Antinomianism.

THE first letter contains some very useful heads of self-examination. In the second,

P 91. I READ, "There is a righteousness which supplies all that the creature needs. To prove this momentous point, is the design of the following sheets."

I HAVE seen such terrible effects, of this unscriptural way of speaking, even on those who had once clearly escaped from the pollutions of the world, that I cannot but earnestly wish, you would speak no otherwise than do the Father of God,

Certainly this mode of expression is not *momentous*. It is always *dangerous*, often *fatal*.

LETTER III. P. 98. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin had reigned unto death, so might grace—*the love of God*—*reign through righteousness*, *unto eternal life*, Rom. v. 20, 21." This is the plain natural meaning of the words. It does not appear, that one word is spoken here about imputed righteousness: neither in the passages cited in the prayer-book, nor in the common-prayer and the articles. In the holy Bible likewise that phrase is not found at all, and the righteousness is laid on Christ's shedding his blood. Nor in the apostle (concerning the thing, there is no question) found in any part of the homilies.

P. 101. "If the fathers be not explicit with regard to the imputation of active righteousness, they abound in passages which evince the substitution of Christ in our stead; passages which disclaim all dependence on any duties of our own, and fix our hopes wholly on the merits of our Saviour. When this is the case, I am very solicitous about any particular forms of expression." O how different those questionable, dangerous forms, and keep close to the scriptural.

LETTER IV. P. 105. "The authority of our church and of those eminent divines," does not touch those particular forms of expression: neither do any of the texts which you afterwards cite. As to the doctrine we are agreed.

Ibid. "The righteousness of God signifies, the righteousness which God-man wrought out." No. It signifies God's method of justifying sinners.

P. 107. "The victims figured the expiation by Christ's blood, the cloathing with skins, the imputation of his righteousness." That does not appear. Did not the one figure our justification, the other, our sanctification?

P. 109. ALMOST every text quoted in this and the following letter, in support of that particular form of expression, is distorted above measure from the plain, obvious meaning, which is pointed out by the context. I shall instance in a few, and just set down their true meaning, without any further remarks.

To shew unto man his uprightness. To convince him of God's justice, in so punishing him.

P. 110. He shall receive the blessing—pardon—from the Lord and righteousness—holiness—from the God of his salvation,—the God who saves him from the guilt and the power of sin.

P. 111. I will make mention of thy righteousness only,—Of thy mercy. So the word frequently means in the old Testament. So it unquestionably means in that text, in (or by) *thy righteousness shall I be exalted*.

P. 112. SION shall be builded up with judgement—after severe punishment—and her citizens with righteousness—with the tenets of the God, following that punishment.

P. 113. IN (or through) the Lord I have righteousness and strength, justification and sanctification. *He hath clothed me with the garment of salvation*,—saved me from the guilt and power of sin. Both of which are again expressed by, *he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness*.

P. 114. My righteousness—my mercy—shall not be abolished.

P. 116. To make reconciliation for iniquity—to atone for all our sins—and to bring in everlasting righteousness, spotless holiness into our souls. And this righteousness is not human, but divine. It is the gift and the work of God.

P. 117. THE Lord our righteousness—the author both of our justification and sanctification.

P. 127. What righteousness shall give us peace at the last day, inherent or imputed? Both. Christ died for us and lives in us, *that we may have boldness in the day of judgement*.

LETTER V. P. 131. *That have obtained the precious faith through the righteousness—the mercy—of the Lord. Seek ye the kingdom of GOD and his righteousness—holiness which springs from God reigning in you.*

P. 132. THEREIN is revealed the righteousness of God—God's method of justifying sinners.

P. 135. "We establish the law, as we expect no salvation without a perfect conformity to it—namely, by

"Christ" Is not this a mere quibble? And a quibble, which after all the laboured evasions of Witius and a thousand more, does totally make void the law? But not so does St. Paul teach. According to him, without holiness, personal holiness, *no man shall see the LORD*. None who is not himself conformed to the law of God here, shall see the Lord in glory.

This is the grand, palpable objection to that whole scheme. It directly makes void the law. It makes thousands content to live and die transgressors of the law, because Christ fulfilled it for them. Therefore, tho' I believe, he hath lived and died for me, yet I would speak very tenderly and sparingly of the former, (and never, seperately from the latter) even as sparingly as do the Scriptures, for fear of this dreadful consequence.

P. 138. "THE gift of righteousness must signify a righteousness not their own." Yes, it signifies the righteousness or holiness, which God gives to and works in them.

P. 139. "THE obedience of one is Christ's actual performance of the whole law." So here his passion is fairly left out! Whereas his *becoming obedient to death*, that is, dying for man, is certainly the chief part, if not the whole which is meant by that expression.

Ibid. "THAT the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us—That is, by our representative in our nature." Amazing! But this you say, "agrees with the tenour of the Apostle's arguing. For he is demonstrating we cannot be justified by our own conformity to the law." No; not here. He is not speaking here of the cause of our justification, but the fruits of it. Therefore that unnatural sense of his words does not at all "agree with the tenour of his arguing."

P. 142. "THE righteousness they attained could not be any personal righteousness." Certainly it was. It was implanted as well as imputed.

P. 145. "FOR instruction in righteousness, in the righteousness of Christ." Was there ever such a comment before? The plain meaning is, for training up in holiness of heart and of life.

P. 146. He shall convince the world of righteousness—that I am not a sinner, but innocent and holy.

P. 148. "THAT we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Not intrinsically, but imputatively." Both the one and the other. God through him, first accounts and then makes us righteous. Accordingly

P. 152. THE righteousness which is of God by faith, is both imputed and inherent.

P. 155. "My faith fixes on both the meritorious life and atoning death of Christ." Here we clearly agree. Hold then to this, and never talk of the former without the latter. If you do, you cannot say, "Here we are exposed to no hazard." Yes, you are to an exceeding great one: even the hazard of living and dying without holiness. And then we are lost for ever.

The sixth letter, contains an admirable account of the earth and its atmosphere, and comprizes abundance of sense in a narrow compass, and exprest in beautiful language.

P. 177. GEMS have "a seat on the virtuous fair one's breast." I can't reconcile this with St. Paul. He says, not with pearls: By a purity of reason, not with diamonds. But in all things I perceive, you are too favourable, both to the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eye. You are a gentle casuist as to every self-indulgence which a plentiful fortune can furnish.

P. 182. "OUR Saviour's obedience"—O say, with the good old Puritans, our Saviour's death or merits. We swarm with Antinomians on every side. Why are you at such pains to increase their number?

P. 194. My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation.—Thy mercy which brings my salvation.

The eighth letter is an excellent description of the supreme greatness of Christ. I do not observe one sentence in it, which I cannot cheerfully subscribe to.

The ninth letter, containing a description of the sea, with various inferences deduced therefrom, is likewise a master-piece, for justness of sentiment, as well as beauty of language. But I doubt whether, "mere shrimps," P. 241. be not too low an expression: and whether you might not as well, have said nothing of "God, the standing repast of

"lent:" or concerning "the exquisite relish of Turbot, or
 "the deliciousness of Sturgeon." Are not such observations
 beneath the dignity of a minister of Christ? I have
 the same doubt, concerning what is said (P. 264.) of "de-
 licately flavoured tea, finely-scented coffee; the friendly
 bowl, the Pyramid of Indian figs, and the Pastacia nut
 of Aleppo." Beware that the mentioning these in such
 a manner is a strong encouragement of luxury and sensu-
 ality. And does the world need this? The English in par-
 ticular?—*Sihon insatiabitur satis sed sponte, instiga.*

LETTER 10. P. 271. "Those treasures which spring
 "from the imputation of Christ's righteousness." Not a
 word of his atoning blood? Why do so many men love to
 speak of his righteousness, rather than his atonement? I
 fear, because it affords a fairer excuse for their own unright-
 eousness: to cut off this, is it not better, to mention both
 together? At least never to name the former without the
 latter?

P. 285. "FAITH is, a persuasion that Christ has shed
 his blood for me, and fulfill'd all righteousness in my stead."
 I can by no means subscribe to this definition. There are
 hundreds, yea thousands of true believers, who never once
 thought, one way or the other, of Christ's fulfilling all right-
 eousness in their stead. I personally know many who to
 this very hour have no idea of it; and yet have each of
 them a divine evidence and conviction, Christ loved me,
 and gave himself for me. This is St. Paul's account of
 faith: and it is sufficient. He that thus believes is justi-
 fied.

P. 287. "It is a sure means of purifying the heart, and
 "never fails to work by love." It surely purifies the
 heart—if we abide in it; but not if we draw back to per-
 dition. It never fails to work by love, while it continues;
 but if itself fail, farewell both love and good works.

FAITH is the hand which receives all that is laid up in
 Christ." Consequently, if we make shipwreck of the
 faith, how much soever is laid up in Christ, from that hour
 we receive nothing.

LETTER 18. P. 288. "FAITH in the imputed righteous-
 "ness of Christ, is a fundamental principle in the gospel."

If so, what becomes of all those who think nothing about imputed righteousness? How many who are full of faith and love, if this be true, must perish everlastingly!

P. 297. "Tay hands must forge the way of the deadly weapon, through the shivering flesh, till it be plunged in the throbbing heart." Are not these descriptions far too strong? May they not occasion unprofitable reasonings in many readers?

Ne puerum coram populo Videri trucidet.

P. 218. "How can this testify to the world?" Not at all. Can this then testify his faith to the world?

P. 304. "You take the certain way to obtain comfort, the righteousness of Jesus Christ." What, without the atonement? So the grounds for an unscriptural, dangerous mode of expiation!

P. 306. "So the merits of Christ are derived to all the faithful." Rather the fruits of the spirit: which are likewise plainly typified by the oil in Zechariah's vision.

P. 310. "Has the law any demand? It must go to him for satisfaction." Suppose, "thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Then I am not obliged to love my neighbour. Christ has satisfied the demand of the law for me. Is not this the very quintessence of Antinomianism?

P. 311. "That righteousness wrought out by Jesus Christ, is wrought out for all his people, to be the cause of their justification, and the purchase of their salvation. The righteousness is the cause, the purchase." So the death of Christ is not so much as named! "For all his people." But what becomes of all other people? They must inevitably perish forever. The die was cast, or ever they were in being. The doctrine to pass them by, has

Consign'd their unborn souls to hell,

And damn'd them from their mother's womb.

I could sooner be a Turk, a Deist, yea an Atheist, than I could believe this. It is less absurd to deny the very being of God, than to make him an almighty tyrant.

P. 318. "The whole world and all its seasons, are rich with our Creator's goodness. His tender mercies are over

"all his works." Are they over the bulk of mankind? Where is his goodness to the non elect? How are his tender mercies over them? "His temporal blessings are given to them." But are they to them blessings at all? Are they not all curses? Does not God know they are? That they will only increase their damnation? Does not he design they should? And this you call goodness! this is tender mercy!

P. 321. "MAY we not discern pregnant proofs of goodness, in each individual object?" No; on your scheme "not a spark of it in this world or the next to the far greater part of the work of his own hands!"

P. 334. "Is God a generous benefactor to the meanest animals, to the lowest reptiles! And will he deny my friend what is necessary to his present comfort, and his final acceptance?" Yea, will he deny it to any soul that he has made? Would you deny it to any if it were in your power?

But if you lov'd whom God abhorr'd

'The servant were above his LORD.

P. 337. THE wedding-garment here means holiness.

P. 340. "THIS is his tender complaint, they will not come unto me!" nay, that is not the case; they cannot. He himself has decreed, not to give them that grace without which their coming is impossible!

"THE grand end which God proposes in all his favourable dispensations to fallen man, is to demonstrate the sovereignty of his grace." Not so: to impart happiness to his creatures, is his grand end herein. "Barely to demonstrate his sovereignty," is a principal of action fit for the great Turk, not the most high God.

P. 341. "God hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servants. He is a boundless ocean of good." Nay, that ocean is far from boundless, if it wholly passes by nineteenths of mankind.

P. 342. "You cannot suppose God would enter into a fresh covenant with a rebel." I both suppose and know he did. "God made the new covenant with Christ, and

charged him with the performance of the conditions. I deny both these assertions, which are the central point wherein Calvinism and Antinomianism meet. "*I have made a covenant with my chosen.*"—Namely, with *David my servant*. So God himself explains it.

P. 362. "He will wash you in the blood which atones and invest you with the righteousness which justifies."—Why should you thus continually put asunder, what God has joined?

P. 440 "God himself at the last day pronounces them righteous, because they are interested in the obedience of the Redeemer. Rather, because they are washed in his blood, and renewed by his spirit."

Upon the whole, I cannot but wish, that the plan of these dialogues had been executed in a different manner.—Most of the grand truths of christianity are herein both explained and proved with great strength and clearness. Why was any thing intermixt, which could prevent any serious christian's recommending them to all mankind? Any thing which must necessarily render them exceptionable, to so many thousands of the children of God? In practical writings I studiously abstain from the very shadow of controversy. Nay, even in controversial, I do not knowingly write one line, to which any but my opponent would object. For *opinions* shall I destroy the work of God? Then am I a bigot indeed. Much more, if I would not drop any *mode of expression*, rather than offend either Jew or Gentile, or the Church of God, I am,

With great sincerity,

Dear Sir,

Your affectionate Brother and Servant,

J. W



LETTERS

TO THE

Reverend Mr. JOHN WESLEY.

LETTER I.



I Received the letter you mention, containing remarks on the dialogues between Theron and Aspasio.—As after a careful perusal, I saw very little reason to alter my sentiments, I laid aside your epistle without returning an answer, in hopes that my silence (which it seems you mistook for obstinacy) would most emphatically speak my advice; which, had it been expressed more plainly, would have been delivered in the Apostle's words, that ye study, or make it your ambition, to be quiet *.

Since you have, by printing these remarks, summoned me, though reluctant, to the bar of the public, it should seem, that I ought not to discredit the truth once delivered to the saints, by a timid silence; and I am the more willing to answer for myself, as I have now the privilege of an unprejudiced judge, and an impartial jury.—If my defence should be lost on my opponent, it may possibly make some useful impressions on the court, and candid audience. However, I will not absolutely despair of convincing Mr. Wesley himself, because it is written, give admonition to a wise

man, and he will yet be wiser*. On some very momentous and interesting points, I may probably be a little more copious than the strict laws of argument demand, in order to exhibit some of the great truths of the gospel, in so clear a light, that he may read who readeth them; in so amiable and inviting a light, that the believer may rejoice in them, and the sinner may long for them. For such digressions, I promise myself an easy pardon, both from yourself and the reader.

Thus you open the debate. "in the second dialogue, is not the description of the Liberator, the language too stiff and affected?" I must confess Sir this animadversion seems to be as just, as the praise which you have here, and elsewhere bestowed, appears to be lavish: the former, if not more pleasing, may be no less serviceable than the latter; for both I acknowledge myself your debtor, and if ever I attempt any thing more in the capacity of an author, I will be sure to keep my eye fixed on the caution you have given.

I am sorry that the next words bring on a complaint, so close to my acknowledgment. "You cite the pages according to the Dublin edition, having wrote the rough draught of what follows in Ireland." But should you not, in complaisance to your readers on this side the water, have referred to the pages of the English edition? For want of such reference, there is hardly distinction enough, in some places, to know which are your words, and which are Aspasio's.—Should you not also, in justice to the author, before you transcribed the rough draught for the press, have consulted the last edition of his work? Which you well knew was not the copy, from which the Irish impression was taken, yet might reasonably suppose to be the least inaccurate.

When I read your next paragraph, I am struck with reverence, I am ashamed and almost astonished, at the littleness of the preceding observations: stiffness of style, and a thou-

* The original phrase is only to give which may signify, give admonition, as well as (what our version has supposed) instruction.

sand such trifles, what are they all compared with *justification* before the infinite and immortal GOD? This is a subject that commands our most awful regard, a blessing that should engage our whole attention. As this is the grand article to come under our consideration, I would desire to maintain an incessant dependence on the divine SPIRIT, that my thoughts may be influenced, and my pen guided by the wisdom which cometh from above, that I may neither pervert the truth, by any error of representations, nor dishonor it by an unchristian temper. It would be easy to make use of bitter satire, and disdainful irony, the contemptuous sneer, or the imbricated frown—And indeed, Sir, you have laid yourself open to every attack of this kind; but these are not the weapons of a Christian's warfare,

— — *Non Defensoribus istis,*

we are to give a reason of the hope that is in us, *with meekness and fear*; *meekness*, with regard to those who interrogate or oppose us; *fear*, with regard to HIM, whose cause we plead, and whose eye is ever upon us. "Is justification," you say, more or less, than GOD's pardoning and accepting a sinner, through the merits of CHRIST?" I somewhat wonder, Sir, that you should ask this question, when it is professedly answered by Aspasio, who has presented you with a very circumstantial definition of justification, explaining it, establishing it, and obviating several objections advanced against it. If you would animadvert with spirit and force, or indeed to any considerable purpose, should you not lay open the impropriety of this definition, shewing from reason and scripture, that it is neither accurate nor orthodox?

At pages 19, 50, the reader may see Aspasio's account of justification, and find the words imputation and righteousness of CHRIST, particularly explained. The latter denoting, "all the various instances of his active and passive obedience;" accordingly it is affirmed (page 51) "the punishment we deserved, endures, the obedience which we owed, he fulfils."—What Aspasio here professes to understand by the righteousness of CHRIST, the

reader is particularly requested to bear in his memory, that he be not misled by Mr. Wesley, who often forgets it, and complains when the righteousness of CHRIST is mentioned, that his penal sufferings are quite omitted. I would not wish, Sir, to have a plainer proof, that you do not discard the active, than Aspasio has hereby given, that he never excludes the passive.

By your question, you hint a dislike, yet without informing us what it is, or wherein Aspasio's illustrations and proofs are deficient. You propose, and *only* propose, another definition. Well then, to differ from you as little as possible, nay, to agree with you, as far as truth will permit, since you are so loth to admit of our representation, we will excede to yours; especially if it be somewhat explained, and a little improved. For indeed the words, in their present form, are rather too vague to constitute any definition. *Pardoning* and *accepting* may happen to be only diversified expressions of the same idea. The *merits of CHRIST* will certainly comport, either with *Popish*, or *Socinian* notions. It abounds in writers of the former sort, and it is to be found in the latter. Therefore, to be more explicit by *pardoning*, I mean GOD's acquitting a sinner from guilt of every kind, and of every degree. By *accepting*, I mean still more, GOD's receiving him into full favor, considering and treating him as righteous, yea perfectly and gloriously righteous.—By the *merits of CHRIST*, I would always be supposed to signify, his active and passive obedience, all that he wrought, and all that he suffered, for the salvation of mankind*. Interested in all this, the believer enters into the divine presence, and stands before the divine MAJESTY—Not like *David's* Ambassadors, stealing themselves into *Jericho*; safe indeed, but with the marks of Ammonitish insults on their persons: he rather enters like that illustrious exile, *Joseph*, into the presence of *Pharaoh*, when his prison garments were taken from him, and

* The merits of CHRIST is certainly an ambiguous phrase, and what I can by no means admire, but as it occurs in Mr. Wesley's letter, and in many valuable writers, I have, led by the example used in the following debate, still underrunning it, and still using it, in the sense explained above.

he was arrayed in *vestures of fine linen*, meet for the shoulders of those who appear before kings. With this explanation I am content that *your* definition take place of mine. I would farther observe, that you have dropt the word *imputed*, which inclines me to suspect, you would cashier the thing. But let me ask, Sir, how can we be justified by the merits of CHRIST, unless they are imputed to us? Would the payment made by a surety, procure a discharge for the debtor, unless it was placed to his account? It is certain, the sacrifices of old could not make an atonement, unless they were imputed to each offerer respectively. This was a ordinance settled by JEHOVAH himself*. And were not the sacrifices, was not their imputation typical of CHRIST, and things pertaining to CHRIST? The former prefiguring his all-sufficient expiation, the latter shadowing forth the way whereby we are partakers of its efficacy.—The righteousness (not the righteousness and, obedience, Aspasio speaks otherwise) which CHRIST performed is reckoned by GOD as our own. This you call an ambiguous expression, but, if considered in conjunction with the foregoing and following enlargements, I should think can hardly deserve the charge. Aspasio all along labours to be understood. In this place he more fully opens his meaning by giving another view of the nature, and by specifying the effects of imputation. The *nature*,—it being the same as placing to our account something not our own †. The *effects*,—CHRIST's righteousness, thus placed to our account, being as effectual for obtaining our salvation, as if it was our own personal qualification ‡. To the latter you expressly agree, to the former you make no objection: to the whole doctrine, thus explained, you elsewhere declare your assent.

It in all this we may depend upon you, Sir, must we not feel an alarming shock at your adjuration in the next paragraph?

* Lev. viii, 18.

† Theron and Aspasio, p. 80.

‡ Ibid. p. 42.

"For CHRIST's sake do not" what? Surely nothing less can excite or justify this vehement exclamation, but the obtrusion of some doctrine, that is most glaringly false and absolutely damnable. Shall we have such a solemn firing, such a thunder of explosion, only to silence a particular phrase? In another person this would look like profane levity; in Mr. *Wishou*, the softest appellation we can give it, is idle pomp—altogether clamour merely against words! words too, the explication of which, and the doctrine contained in them, yourself allow. Dear Sir, what is a word or a phrase? Can it do either good or harm, but as conveying right or wrong sentiments? Will the mere pronouncing or hearing of a word (be it *Maluitabra*, or *Higga*, or *Selah*, or imputed) without its idea, pervert the principles of men, and induce them to work all unchristianity with greediness? As you have been firing without an enemy (*Aspasio* is owned for an ally) so you seem to be triumphing without a victory. *Aspasio*'s charity for those who are disgusted at the expression, and have no explicit knowledge of the doctrine, is guarded by the words immediately following—"yet live under the belief of the truth, and" "in the exercise of the duty," as well as by the annexed description of the persons, and their temper; who are far enough from fancying, that if they may but be pardoned for the sake of CHRIST, they can obtain the divine favor, and a title to future happiness, by their own good behaviour. Hence it will appear, that he has been too cautious, to part with the very thing for which he is contending.—And this is more abundantly evident, from the close of his charitable paragraph, wherein, though he allows such people to be safe; yet he laments their embarrass, and their deficiency in light, strength, and consolation. "The phrase" "is not scriptural." Suppose it were not, this would afford but a slight reason, for so passionate an outcry; however, this is certain, St Paul, uses the phrase, *GOD imputeth**, and *that righteous might be imputed*†. Now, is it possible, that there should be righteousness imputed, yet

* Rom. ii. 6.

† Rom. iv. 22.

not an imputed righteousness? To assert this must argue either a wonderful subtle refinement, or an exceedingly strong prejudice. "It is not necessary"—Perhaps so. But is it not necessary Mr. Wesley should either inform us, what sense of the phrase it is, which he apprehends so likely to mislead men, or else, instead of excluding against Aspasio, should join all his force with him, in denoting that sense which they both espouse? "It has done no man's hurt"—When we are made sensible of the manner in which, indeed of any real, hurt done by the phrase, imputed, when we see those who dislike it certainly wince at the sentiment expressed in other words, we will then consent to resign it for its equivalent, *not* *imputed*,—*placed to our account*,—*as effectual as if it were a personal qualification*.—Till then we must guard the case of for the sake of the jewel. We prefer the word *imputed*, because it says more at once, than any other term we know, and because we are aware of a common practice used in all ages, by the opposers of sound doctrine. They pretend a zeal only against the phrase, that by bringing this into disuse, they may cause that to be forgotten. Shall we not then dispute for imputed righteousness? Yes, Sir, we must dispute, both for the doctrine and for the phrase, since there are persons who openly strike at the one, and we fear with a view to supplant the other. Shall we not dispute for imputed righteousness—though the words are a grand peculiarity of the scriptures, and the thing the very spirit and essence of the gospel? Not dispute for that which is better to us sinners than all worlds, better than our hearts could wish, or our thoughts conceive; which in short is the best, the noblest, the completest gift, that GOD himself can bestow!

When such a gift, and such a righteousness is the subject of disputation, we must not give place, no, *not for truth we*: we must maintain its matchless excellency, so long as we have any breath, or any being. We must say in direct opposition to your fervent but unadvised zeal, "for CHRIST'S sake" let us contend earnestly for imputed righteousness; because it is the brightest jewel in his mediatorial crown.—

"For the sake of immortal souls," let us hold fast and hold forth this precious truth; because it yields the strongest consolation to the guilty conscience, and furnishes the most endearing, as well as the most prevailing inducement to universal obedience.

"To ascribe pardon to CHRIST's passive, eternal life to his active obedience, is fanciful rather than judicious." The remark is just, not so the quotation; Aspasio is somewhat disfigured by your distortion of his features; he limps a little, by your dislocation of a limb. There is in his language, guard enough to check every attempt, either to dissolve the union, or sever the coagency, of the different parts of our LORD's righteousness.

But let us give Aspasio a fair hearing, thus he expresses himself, "to divide them the active and passive righteousness) into detached portions, independent on each other, seems to be fanciful rather than judicious." To divide into detached portions, is more than to distinguish between the one and the other. The latter Aspasio practises, the former he disavows. "Independent of each other"—do these words stand for nothing? Have they no meaning, that here you shew them no regard, and never recollect them throughout your whole epistle? Had you honored them with any degree of notice, several of your objections must have been precluded, and if the more candid reader pleases to bear them in memory, several of your objections, will at the very first view, fall to the ground. Besides, the person who tells us, the case seems to be so, is not so peremptory, as he who roundly asserts it to be so; the former is all that Aspasio has advanced. Though I am willing that you should correct his style, yet I must beg of you, Sir, not to make him quite so positive; let him have the satisfaction of being modest, even where he has the misfortune, in your opinion at least, to be erroneous.

"CHRIST's universal obedience from his birth to his death, is the one foundation of my hope," says Aspasio. To which you assent, and with a laudable vehemence, reply, "this is unquestionably right." I wish, Sir, you would ponder your words before you speak, at least before you print, that there may be something fixed and certain, on

which we may depend, and by which you will abide. One would think, after this acknowledgment, pronounced with such an air of solemnity, you could never so far forget yourself, as to open your mouth against the obedience, the universal obedience of CHRIST, which surely must include both what he wrought, and what he suffered. You confess it to be your foundation,—the foundation of your hope, the only foundation of your hope; can you then, without the most amazing inconsistency, either wish to secrete the doctrine, or offer to discountenance the expression?

“There is no manner of need to make the imputation of CHRIST’s active righteousness a separate head of discourse.”—No manner of need, even though you declare, that this active righteousness, together with the expiatory death, is the only foundation of your hope! can you think it possible to treat of such a topic too particularly, too distinctly, too minutely?—Aspasio has shewn the need, or assigned the reason for this method of handling the subject; because it sets the fulness of our LORD’s merit in the clearest light, and gives the completest honor to GOD’s holy law. Have you alledged any thing to disprove, or so much as to invalidate his plea? Ought not this to have been done before your assertion can be valid, or even decent?

Besides, are there not persons in the world, who fondly imagine, that if they can but have pardon through CHRIST, they shall by their own doings secure eternal life? When such persons are in danger of overlooking the active obedience of the REDEEMER, why should you not for their sakes allow us to make the imputation of his righteousness “a separate head of discourse?” That, seeing the transcendent perfection of CHRIST’s work, they may cease from confiding in their own *, lest it be said to them another day, *I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works, that for the grand purpose of justification, they shall not profit thee †.*

* Heb. iv. 14.

† Isa. lviii. 12.

We must therefore take leave to dwell upon the active righteousness of our LORD; we must display its perfection, in opposition to all the vain pretensions of human qualifications, endeavours, or attainments; we must demonstrate that as the heavens are higher than the earth, so is this divine obedience higher than all the works of the children of men. Yea, so transcendent in itself, and absolutely perfect, as to be incapable of any augmentation. All the good deeds of all the saints, could they be added to it, would not increase in any degree its justifying efficacy, it is like all the other works of GOD, concerning which we are told, *nothing can be added to them.* This brings to my remembrance a most beautiful, and sublime representation, which you must have read in the evangelical prophet, *every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain, and the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.* Here mountains are demolished, valleys are elevated, and the earth is levelled into a spacious plain on purpose to accomplish what Mr. Wesley supposes unnecessary; on purpose to give the most clear, full, striking view of the great REDEEMER, of his wonderful person, and glorious work; that he alone may be distinguished and exalted; may walk majestic and conspicuous through the midst of mankind, as being singly and completely sufficient for the recovery of sinners. That all flesh, not Jews only, but Gentiles also; not men of reputation only, but the meanest of mortals, the most infamous of wretches, may together see his glory, may on equal ground, without any pre-eminence of one above another, contemplate and partake of his precious death and perfect righteousness, which are the one object of divine complacency, and the sovereign glory of the LORD REDEEMER. According to the import of this magnificent piece of imagery, all the differences that subsist between one man and another are abolished; nothing but CHRIST and his complete work are proposed, as the cause of justification and the ground of hope. Faith beholds nothing but the divine JESUS; it never enquires, what have I done? what have I sinned? but what has that most illustrious person-

age done, and what suffered ? What has JEHOVAH manifested in our nature, *brought* for the benefit and redemption of sinners ? Faith is never weary of viewing or reviewing either the active and passive obedience of IMMANUEL. Faith will declare, that neither of these points can be set forth in too strong, or too recommending a light. Faith is ever desiring to see more and more of the SAVIOUR's worthiness, that the soul may rejoice in his excellency, and be filled with all his fulness

May you, dear Sir, abound in this faith, and live under such views of GOD our SAVIOUR ; then I flatter myself you will be disatisfied with your present opinion, and not be disgusted at the freedom of speech, used by

Yours, &c.





LETTER II.

REV. SIR,

I AM particularly pleased at my entrance on this epistle, because it presents me with a view of Mr. *Wesley* in very good humour. Instead of rebuking, he commends. He puts off the frown of censure, for the smile of approbation. I hope to follow the amiable example. To approve and applaud, wherever opportunity offers, and truth permits. And though I shall be sometimes obliged to oppose or refuse; yet, I shall do both with all the tenderness and lenity, which may consist with a proper vindication of the truth.

“ The third and fourth dialogues contain an admirable illustration and confirmation of the great doctrine of “ CHRIST’s satisfaction.”—This is generously acknowledged. Yet even here it so unhappily falls out, that complaisance gets the start of judgement. Did you advert Sir, to the state of the controversy, or see the consequence of *Aspasio*’s arguing, you must either give up a favourite tenet, or else dissent from his doctrine.

Aspasio maintains, that CHRIST’s sufferings were punishment; real, proper punishment. Now could CHRIST, an innocent person, be punished, without bearing sin; the very sin of others? Could CHRIST, a divine person, bear the sin of others, and not do it perfectly away! Or can they, whose guilt was punished in CHRIST, and whose sin is perfectly done away by CHRIST, can they perish eternally? But I forbear. Yourself, and the judicious

will easily apprehend my meaning, and discern the point, to which these questions lead. All the benefit I propose by this remark, is, to convince Mr. *Wesley*, that he is not incapable of a mistake.—That he has tripped a little, in what he commends, and therefore may possibly make a false step, in what he *condemns*.

Unless I may be allowed to propose this additional advantage, the rectifying an impropriety in some people's apprehensions, concerning our LORD's vicarious sufferings. It is usual to say, "he bore the punishment, not the guilt; the penalty, not the fault." Which seems to be a distinction, more scrupulous than judicious. Answers no other end, but that of derogating from our REDEEMER's grace, and weakening the foundation of our hopes.

The guilt of sin, I take to be what the Apostle calls, the transgression of the law. From hence arises the obligation to punishment. This guilt, our LORD so truly bore, that he was no less liable to the arrest of justice, and the infliction of vengeance, than if he himself had committed the most enormous crimes.—He bare, says the HOLY GHOST, the sin of many. But punishment cannot be reckoned the same as sin, any more than wages can be accounted the same as work. If then our LORD bore sin itself, he must bear every thing criminal, that is included in it; no circumstance of demerit or aggravation excepted.

He bore the fault, therefore he makes us without fault in the sight of GOD; and will present us faultless before the throne, with exceeding joy.—He bore the guilt—Therefore our LORD's sufferings were real punishment, justly inflicted by the supreme JUDGE, and, on principles of justice, discharge us from all punishment whatever. He bore the filth,—therefore he felt, what those wretched souls endure, who die in their iniquities; his eternal FATHER forsook him, and hid his face from him as from an abominable object.

This renders our SAVIOUR's propitiation, great, wonderful, glorious. Seeing this, believing this, we have nothing to fear. Conscience is satisfied, and the accuser of the brethren is silenced. Nothing can be laid to our charge

by the righteous law, and nothing remains to awaken the indignation of the righteous JUDGE.—Whereas, if this was not done, we have reason to be terribly apprehensive. If CHRIST bore not the guilt, then sinners must bear it in their own persons; if he took not away the filth; then it must lie on transgressors, and render them loathsome for ever. If the fault was not transferred to him, then it must abide upon us, and be our everlasting ruin.

Neither does this doctrine in any degree detract from our SAVIOUR's dignity. It rather gives him the honor due unto his name, JESUS. As in the scales of a balance, the lower the one descends, the higher the other mounts, so the deeper our MEDIATOR's humiliation sinks, to the more exalted height does his glory rise. The more horrible the condition to which he submitted, the more illustriously his goodness shines, and the more clearly the perfection of his work appears.

Satisfaction was made to the divine law, says Aspasio.—“I do not remember any such expression in scripture,” replies Mr. Wesley.—But do you not remember this expression in the epistle to the Galatians, CHRIST was made under the law *? Why was he made under the law, but to fulfil its precepts, and undergo its penalty? And is not this a satisfaction to its demands?

The truth is, the divine law was violated by our sins. It was absolutely impossible for us to make any reparation, therefore CHRIST in our nature and in our stead submitted to its obligations, that he might magnify it, injured authority, and render it in the highest degree venerable: might make even its tremendous sanctions and rigorous requirements, the very basis of grace, mercy, and peace.—Divinely noble contrivance! unspeakably precious expedient! by this means, vengeance and forbearance have met together; wrath and love have kissed each other, in the redemption of sinners. The law says, I am fulfilled. Justice says, I

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* Gal. iv. 4.

am satisfied. While both concur to expedite and ascertain the salvation of a believer.

"This way of speaking of the law, as a person injured, to be satisfied, seems hardly defensible." Does not the Apostle speak of the law as person? A person that liveth*, to whom some are married, and to whom others are dead? Aspasio will always think himself, and his manner of speaking sufficiently defensible, so long as he has the apostolical practice for his precedent.

Having such a precedent he wants no other; otherwise he might plead the authority of Mr. John Wesley; who in his explanatory notes on the new testament, says—"the law is here spoken of (by a common figure) as a person, to which as to an husband, life and death are ascribed†." And if the law be an husband, may not an husband be injured? May not an injured husband insist upon being satisfied?

"All the benefits of the new covenant are the purchase of CHRIST's blood," this is Aspasio's belief. To this you assent, "*surely they are.*"—With pleasure I should receive your suffrage, was I not afraid that this is your meaning; they are so the purchase of his blood, as not to have any dependence on, or any connection with, his most perfect obedience. I was alarmed by the close of your last paragraph, and my suspicions are increased by the following negative interrogation; "after this has been fully proved, where is the need, where is the use of contending so strenuously, for the imputation of his righteousness?"

Aspasio has informed you, Sir, in the second dialogue.—He has there shewn the advantage of unfolding, circumstantially and copiously, this momentous truth.—To give you farther satisfaction, he has quoted the words of an eminent divine, of which the following are a part,—"*whoever rejects the doctrine of the imputation of our SAVIOUR's righteousness to man, does, by so doing, reject the imputation of man's sin to our SAVIOUR, and all the consequences of it.*"—If you are not satisfied with Mr. *Staynoe's*

* Rom. vii. i. 1.

† See explan. Notes, Rom. vii. 1.

reasons, you are remitted to St. *Paul*. In *Rom. v* (a chapter of distinguished dignity and importance) he teaches mankind that *CHRIST died* for the ungodly; that we are justified through his *blood*, are saved from wrath by his *death*. After all this had been fully proved, where was the need, where was the use of insisting largely upon that obedience of *ONE* by which many are made * righteous? Or upon that righteousness of *ONE*, which is imputed to many for justification of life? Yet this the inspired writer evidently does.

Answer the foregoing question, in behalf of the Apostle, and you will answer it in behalf of *Aspasio*. Or if you decline the office, give me leave, Sir, to answer it on behalf of them both. The blood of *CHRIST* is never considered as independent on, or detached from, the righteousness of *CHRIST*. They united their blessed efficacy in accomplishing the work of our redemption; we always look upon them as a grand and glorious aggregate, in their agency inseparable, though in mediation distinguishable. Being thus distinguishable, at proper times, we meditate upon each distinctly. We display each with all the particularity possible, and cannot but contend for the imputation of one, as well as of the other. The farther we dig into either of these spiritual mines, the greater fund of treasures we discover. The more we glorify the *SAVIOUR*, the more we strengthen faith, and the greater addition we make to our comfort, our peace, our joy.

Aspasio enquires; if *CHRIST* was our substitute as to penal suffering, why not as to justifying obedience? You reply—"the former is expressly asserted in scripture, the latter is not expressly asserted there." A small inaccuracy here; Sir! the former is no more a scripture expression, than the latter; while the latter is no less the doctrine and sense of scripture than the former.—A little piece of forgetfulness likewise! since you just now acknowledged, that "*CHRIST's* universal obedience was the *one* foundation of your hope." But how can his obedience be any

foundation of your hope, if in this capacity he was not your substitute? Take away the circumstance of substitution, and there is no more ground for your reliance on the obedience of *Christ* than for your reliance on the obedience of *Gabriel*. We are made the righteousness of *GOD*, because we are *IN* him, as our proxy and our head. Because he wrought the justifying righteousness, not only in our nature but in our name, not only as our benefactor, but as our representative.

“As sin and misery have abounded through the first *Adam*, mercy and grace have much more abounded through the second. So that now none have reason to complain.” Here indeed we have *Aspasio*’s words, but in a patched and disfigured condition. One part taken from page 195, and another wrenched from page 191. Let any one read the whole of those passages, and judge whether they can be fairly applied to the doctrines of election or predestination. Yet *Mr. Wesley* is resolved at all adventures, with or without occasion, to introduce these subjects of deep and perplexed disputation. Therefore he replies, “no, not if the second *Adam* died for all, otherwise all for whom he did not die, have great reason to complain.”

Here, Sir, do you not force an inference from *Aspasio*’s words, foreign to his design? He is speaking of those who betake themselves to *CHRIST*, and are recovered through his righteousness. Such persons he particularly mentions. Of such alone he discourses; without considering the case of others, who, despising, or neglecting the *REDEEMER*, reject the counsel of *GOD* against themselves.—Would it not be as editing to the reader, and as agreeable to your office, if you should join with *Aspasio* in displaying the free superabundant, infinitely rich grace of our *GOD*; altogether as becoming this, as to divert his aim, and retard his steps, when he is pressing forwards to this prize of our high calling in *CHRIST JESUS*?

Aspasio’s words are, “when we betake ourselves to *CHRIST JESUS*, we shall find, that, as sin and misery have abounded, &c.” Please to observe, Sir, how he limits his discourse, consequently is obliged to defend no-

thing, but what corresponds with such limitation.

Had the Israelites any cause to be dissatisfied with the provision, made for their sustenance and their cure, when the serpent of brass was lifted up on the pole, and when the bread from heaven lay round about their tents? No more have sinners any cause to think themselves aggrieved, when the salvation of GOD is evidently set before them in the gospel; is brought to their very door, in the preaching of the word, and they are allowed, importuned, commanded to receive it by faith. This is enough for me. Enough this for any transgressors, who want, not to gratify curiosity, but to inherit life.—If they, or you, Sir, chuse to pry further, and to intrude into the divine secrets, I must leave you to yourselves; saying, as I depart, “the secret things belong unto the LORD our GOD; but those things which are revealed, belong unto us and our children*.”

“The whole world of believers.”—“This is an expression which never occurs in scripture”—It affords me a kind of presumptive proof, that, solid objections are not at hand, when such shadows are listed into the service.—I should be under no pain if you could prove your charge, beyond all contradiction. To what would it amount? Why that Aspasio having occasion to mention a certain topic, happened not to make use of the very syllables and letters made use of in scripture. And do you or I, Sir, in all our sermons, journals, preservatives, and christian libraries, undertake to use none but scriptural expressions? Had we done this, one benefit might indeed have accrued to the public. It would considerably have reduced our volumes. But I trifle as well as Mr. Wesley. You proceed to enforce your remonstrance, by adding—“neither has the expression any countenance from scripture.” I am really ashamed to detain our readers any longer upon so trivial a point. Therefore what I am going to reply, is only a word to yourself. You, Sir, can tell who it is that affirms in a certain hymn;

For ev'ry Man
 It's finish'd it's past—
 The world is forgiv'n
 For JESUS's sake.

The world forgiven! what, all the world? Every child of Adam? They who believe not on CHRIST and died in their sins? This you cannot mean; this you dare not assert; this, I think, no mortal can suppose. You yourself therefore, by "the world," must intend "the believing world;" and are you offended at *Aspasio* for commenting on your text? For expressing plainly what is implied in your own words?

In the LORD shall all the house of Israel be justified.—This text *Aspasio* quotes, and acquiesces in the common version, upon which you animadvert. "It ought unquestionably to be rendered *by or through the LORD.*" How hard is *Aspasio's* lot! if he does not use the exact language of scripture, he is criminal at your bar, witness the preceding objection; if he does use the exact language of scripture, as in the present instance, you indite him for an erroneous translation. So that it is next to impossible to escape your censure.

In the LORD, you affirm is not the pure language of scripture, it is a wrong translation, "and ought unquestionably to be rendered by or through the LORD." Yet *quisquis adhuc uno partem colit asse minervam*—Whoever has learnt Hebrew no more than a month, will assure our English reader, that the prefix is the very first word in the bible. Must it there be translated by or through the beginning?—If our young scholar have only his psalter, he can shew the same particle occurring three times within the first verse. In the counsel—in the way—in the seat.—Twice in the second verse; his delight is in the law.—In his law will he exercise himself. Three times more in the remainder of the Psalm, shall bring forth fruit in his season—shall not stand in judgement. Neither in the congregation of the righteous.—Now let the English reader judge for himself, whether the Hebrew prefix *nasi* "unquestionably be rendered" in all these places "by or through"

By or through his season ! by or through the congregation ! But I stop, there is no need to apply all the passages. Neither is there any need of critical skill in languages, to determine concerning any one of them. Common sense in this case is sufficiently qualified to be our critic and our arbitrator.—I only wish, Sir, you had produced the evidence for the corrected version. Then the public might have seen on which side the balance were likely to turn ; and which were the most cogent logic, “Aspasio’s doctrine is false, therefore the translation is wrong ; or the translation is fair, therefore his doctrine is true.”

By this time, I believe, the unlearned reader will begin to discern, what degree of credit is due to your criticisms upon the original, and to your alteration of the common version, when they are supported by nothing more, than your bare assertion --I also begin to be apprehensive that our canvassing the sense of words, and sifting the dead languages, will be no very agreeable entertainment to any reader. I will therefore for the future be more concise in the execution of this business ; especially as I have here given a specimen of what might be done. I will try, if it is not possible, to animate what would otherwise be dull, and to blend godly edifying, with critical disquisition.

Ye are complete in him. With this translation also, Mr. Wesley finds fault. “The words literally rendered are, ye are filled with him.”—I am ready to grant, that places may be found, where the preposition *er* must be understood according to your sense. But then every one knows that this is not the native, obvious, literal meaning ; nor is there the least occasion to depart from the received interpretation, it is suitable to the context, and to the scope of the whole epistle.

However, we will suppose your criticism to be just. Does this destroy or enervate Aspasio’s argument ? Would you have one meaning contradict or supplant the other ? “Ye are filled with him, therefore ye are not complete in him ?” Does the former sense include or imply the latter ? Can you, or I, or any one be filled with every requisite for our recovery and happiness, yet not be complete ? It seems therefore, you get nothing by this criticism, but

doing violence to the phrase, without any improvement of the sense, or any advantage to your cause.

“The whole passage (you affirm) relates to sanctification, not to justification.” Where is your proof, Sir, ? This we always expect. This Mr. Wesley seldom, if ever condescends to give. “Yes, he says, any unprejudiced reader may observe it.” A strange kind of proof ! reducible to no figure in logic, unless there be a figure stiled presumption. Was I to answer for the unprejudiced reader, I think he would observe the very reverse. The words of the Apostle are not a little forcible against your sense of the passage, as will appear from the transitive verb also. The next and the subsequent verses, we allow, relate to sanctification : if this verse does the same, such is the manner of the Apostle’s reasoning, “In whom ye are sanctified, in “whom also ye are sanctified.” Whereas if the first clause denotes the justification of the Colossian converts through the righteousness of CHRIST, if the following periods describe their sanctification, as a consequence of this most most happily operating privilege. then the reasoning is just, and the transition graceful. “In him ye are completely “justified, in him also ye are truly sanctified.”

The whole passage is calculated to teach us that CHRIST is the fulness of our sufficiency. In him, and in him alone, there is enough to answer all the purposes of wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.—It is intended likewise to admonish us, that we should rest satisfied with him alone, in opposition to all the fond inventions of men ; who would introduce something else for the ground of our confidence, and the cause of our consolation, as though it was said ;—

If indeed our LORD JESUS CHRIST had been an ordinary person, or merely a created being, ye might well be offended at my doctrine. Ye might then with some colour of reason seek to the maxims of philosophy for wisdom, or to the works of the law for righteousness. But CHRIST is an immensely glorious person, for in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. CHRIST is an incomparably exalted sovereign—for he is the head of all principalities and powers.—Yea, CHRIST is the supreme

incomprehensible JEHOVAH; for *in him dwelleth all the fulness of the GODHEAD* bodily. Being therefore transplanted into him by faith, ye are complete: Partakers of him; ye have every blessing and all good. Thought cannot imagine, nor desire crave, any thing fatter, greater, higher.

Matchless privilege! exalted felicity! O may the knowledge of it, fill our hearts as *the waters cover the abyss of the sea*! then will we sing the hymn which once expressed your sentiments; and still expresses mine:

* Join earth and heav'n to bless
The LORD our righteousness.
The mystery of redemption this,
This the SAVIOUR's strange design;
Man's offence was counted his,
Ours his righteousness divine.

In him complete we shine;
His death, his life is mine: *
Fully am I justified,
Free from sin, and more than free;
Guiltless, since for me he died,
Righteous, since he liv'd for me!

The text lately quoted from *Isaiah*, is part of a paragraph eminent for its dignity and usefulness. We then considered a fragment of it in a critical view; let us now examine

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* See p. 36. of hymns and spiritual songs. Anonymous indeed, but universally ascribed to Mr. Wesley. In these excellent lines, how strongly marked are the sentiments of the gospel! our offences so fully imputed to CHRIST, as to be accounted his. His righteousness so fully imputed to us, as to be accounted ours. In him we are complete, because his most obedient life, and his all-atoning death are ours. We are guiltless, not through our repentance, or reformation, but because he has died for us. We are righteous, not on account of any graces or attainments of our own, but because he has lived for us. To these truths I most cordially subscribe. This is that good old wine that once made M. Wesley's heart glad. He has since tasted new; but I hope he will be brought to say, "The old is better."

the whole of it with a devotional spirit. Thus examined, I trust it will be no longer a dry bone, but a feast of fat things full of marrow. Permit me to propose a correct translation of the original; to add a short illustration of the meaning, and then take my leave for the present.

“ Look unto me and be saved all the ends of the earth,
 “ for I am GOD, and there is none else. By myself have
 “ I sworn, the word of righteousness goeth out of my
 “ mouth, the word shall not return To me every knee
 “ shall bow, and every tongue shall swear*, saying, surely
 “ † in the LORD have I righteousness and strength. To
 “ him shall men come, and all that are offended in him,
 “ shall be ashamed. In the LORD shall all the seed of
 “ Israel be justified, and in him shall they glory.”

Here the SON of GOD presents himself in all the glories of his person, and all the riches of his grace. Presents himself, as the object of faith, and the author of salvation. To be received by sinners, without any recommending qualities, or any pre-eminence of one above another.—But hear his gracious words.

Look unto me, wretched ruined transgressors, as the wounded Israelites looked unto the brazen serpent. Look unto me dying on the cross as your victim, and obeying the law as your surety.—Not by doing, but by looking and believing; not by your own deeds, but by my works, and my sufferings, *be ye saved*. This is the mysterious but certain way of salvation. Thus shall ye be delivered from guilt, rescued from hell, and reconciled to GOD. Who are invited to partake of this inestimable benefit? All the ends of the earth. People of every nation under heaven; of every station in life; of every condition and every character, not excepting the chiefest of sinners.

* Shall I swear. Our translation seems to discontinue the divine speech here; which weakens the force and diminishes the dignity of the passage. I apprehend JEHOVAH is still speaking, and in the following words, prescribes the form of the confession, of dictates the words of the oath, in which sinners shall testify their allegiance—even the allowance of faith.

It is possible that the obedience of *one*, should save innumerable millions? It is not only possible but indubitable. *For I am GOD* infinite in dignity and power; therefore all-sufficient, yea omnipotent to save. To save all that come unto me; be the multitudes ever so great, or their cases ever so desperate.--(Is nothing to be done by transgressors themselves? Are no conditions to be fulfilled on their part?) None—*there is nought beside me*. No person can take any share in this great transaction. Nothing can in the least degree co-operate with my merits. Should you add to my obedience and death, all that saints have performed, and martyrs have endured, it would be like adding a grain to the sands of the ocean, or a moment to the days of eternity.

Such is my compassionate invitation; and this my inviolable decree. *I have* not only spoken, but *sworn*; sworn by myself and all my incomprehensible excellencies. *The word of righteousness*, that which relates to the grandest of all subjects, and most important of all interests, is planned, adjusted, and unalterably determined. Now even now it goes out of my mouth, is declared with the utmost solemnity, and established by veracity itself. The word shall not return, either to be repealed by me, or frustrated by any other.—What is the decree confirmed by this most awful oath? We are all attention to hear it. *To me every knee shall bow*. Every soul of man, who desires to inherit eternal life, shall submit to my righteousness, and as an unworthy creature, as an obnoxious criminal, obtain the blessing wholly through my atonement.—*To me every tongue shall swear*. Be man's supposed virtues ever so various, or ever so splendid, all shall be disclaimed, and my worthiness alone shall stand. Renouncing every other trust, they shall repose the confidence of their souls on me alone, and make public confession of this their faith before the whole world. But we, O LORD, are ignorant, we cannot order our speech by reason or darkness.—This then shall be the form of your oath, such the tenour of your confession.

Surely—It is a most wonderful, yet a most faithful saying, extremely comfortable and equally certain. O ly—not in myself, not in a poor frail creature, but in the incar-

nate JEHOVAH alone, in his divinely excellent deeds, and unutterably meritorious sufferings, *I have righteousness*, a righteousness without spot, without defect, and in all respects consummate: such as satisfies every requirement of the law, and most thoroughly expiates all my iniquities.—Such as renders me completely accepted before my judge, and intitles me to everlasting life. From the joyful knowledge, the personal appropriation; and the perpetual improvement of this inestimable privilege, I have *strength* for my sanctification. Now do I indeed delight myself in the LORD, who perfectly reconciled, and infinitely gracious, has done so great things for me. Now do I cordially love my neighbour, and being so happy myself, unfeignedly long for his eternal happiness, that he may be a partaker with me of this great salvation.

To this sovereign decree, the prophet sets, as it were, his seal, or else, in a transport of joy, he fore-tells the accomplishment of it. Yes,, my brethren, *to him*, even to this gracious REDEEMER shall men come: I see them flying as clouds for multitude, as doves for speed. They believe the report of his gospel, and receive of his fullness.—Whereas, all they that are offended in him, that cannot away with his doctrine, which pours contempt upon all human excellency, and will allow no righteousness to avail but that which is divine; who refuse to come unto him, poor, and miserable, and stript of every recommendation; all they shall be ashamed. The fig-leaves of their own duties, or their own endowments, shall neither adorn them for glory, nor screen them from wrath—but shall abandon them to vengeance, and cover them with double confusion. While on the other hand, all the seed of Israel, every true believer, shall be justified in the LORD. Against these persons no accusation shall be valid: no condemnation shall take place: so magnificent is the majesty, so surpassingly efficacious are the merits of their SAVIOUR, that in him they shall not only confide, but glory; not only be safe, but triumphant; clothed with his incomparable righteousness, they shall challenge every adversary, and defy every danger.

To this portion of scripture I have led back your thoughts, that I might not close with any disgusting sentiments, but might leave a sweet savour on your mind, on the reader's mind, and on the mind of

Rev. Sir,

Your's, &c,





LETTER III.

. REV. SIR,

LET me, now resume my observations on your epistle. Which I do, not for the sake of disputing, but for the cause of truth.

The gospel contains many sublime and glorious truths. But there is one, which, beyond all others, characterizes its nature, its import, and design. Which makes it most eminently to differ from every other form of religion, professed or known in the world. I mean the doctrine of free justification, through the righteousness of CHRIST. This is to the religion of JESUS, what the particular features and turns of countenance, are to each individual person.

I have sometimes amused myself, with standing by a painter, and observing him at his work. Here, I have been surprised to see, how much a very little stroke would alter the aspect of his draught; would turn the gay into a melancholy, or the composed into a frantic countenance. Several of Mr. Wesley's touches are to appearance small; but, I fear, they will be found to disfigure more than a little the heavenly portrait; and give a new, not the native air, to the truth as it is in JESUS—But I proceed; my business being to prove, not to blame.

Sinners, who betake themselves* to the all-sufficient SAVIOUR for redemption, are truly accepted by GOD, for his beloved SON's sake. This is justification through imputed righteousness, says Aspasio.—“That remains to be proved,” answers Mr. Wesley.—I think, it is pretty largely, and I would hope, it is satisfactorily proved, thro’

the whole book. Nay; I find Mr. Wesley himself ere long acknowledging, that, "as to the doctrine, we are agreed." Either therefore you have received the proof, which you demand; or else you can submit without conviction, and agree without cause of agreement.—Not to take advantage of such slips, I would rather enlarge upon what may be useful.

I would ask Mr. Wesley; in what other way sinners can be justified or accepted, save only through imputed righteousness?—Through their own good deeds, and holy tempers? This supposes the fruits to be good, while the tree is corrupt; and would make salvation to be of works, not of grace.—Through their own faith, standing in the law? Then they are justified before a perfect GOD, by an imperfect endowment; and life eternal is obtained, by the exercises of their own mind, not by the merits of JESUS CHRIST.—Are they justified without any righteousness, either wrought by themselves, or received * from another? This is an unworthy thought; this were an unsufferable practice; JEHOVAH himself being judge. He that justifieth the wicked is an abomination †.

Say not; GOD is a free agent, and not bound to observe his own law. Say rather; the rule of righteousness revealed in the law, is his most stedfast will: unchangeable as his nature.—Consider also; what this law requires. A satisfaction for sin, not defective, but completely sufficient; a performance of the command, not sincere only, but absolutely perfect.—Will GOD, in justifying a sinner, disregard, contradict, overthrow his own law? In no wise. Since then it insists upon, what no mortal can yield, must not all men perish for ever?

* Rom. vi. 17.

† Prov. xvii. 25. This is an invariable maxim. It is that word of GOD, which abideth for ever. Yet it is no objection to his method of justifying the ungodly. Because, he first imputes his SON's righteousness unto them: thereby renders them truly and perfectly righteous: then pronounces them such; and as such; receives them to pardon, to favour, and eternal life. Does not the text, thus considered, afford an inconsistent argument for the necessity of an imputed righteousness?

This would be the unavoidable consequence if matters rested on human abilities. But here the blessed gospel comes to our relief. Shewing us, that GOD, in his immense mercy, and unsearchable wisdom, has found out a way, at once, to satisfy the unalterable law, and save insolvent man. To justify even the chief of sinners; yet without the least violation of justice, truth, or holiness.—What is this way? His own SON accomplishes the great work.—How? By relaxing the precepts of the law, that we may perform them? By disannulling the sentence of the law, that we may escape it? Heaven and earth shall pass away, before any such dishonorable expedient takes place. On the contrary; he gives satisfaction to the sentence, by suffering the tremendous punishment denounced; and he fulfils the precept, by yielding the sinless obedience required.—Because this was to be finished in the nature, which had transgressed, therefore he was made man. Because this was to be truly, or rather infinitely meritorious, therefore the man was one person with the GODHEAD.

Still it may be enquired; how the obedience of another can relieve my distress? How indeed! but by GOD's transferring my guilt to him, and imputing his obedience to me. By this method, the thing is clearly, and completely effected. In this method, I see a propriety and an efficacy, that silence my doubts, and comfort my heart. Accordingly, it is written, in the scriptures; *GOD was in CHRIST reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.* GOD; the work was too arduous, to be performed by a created agent. Therefore GOD himself was in CHRIST. None less than the Almighty LORD could execute the business. But if HE undertake it, how successfully must it be carried on, and how gloriously finished!—*Reconciling the world*, not setting poor transgressors to reconcile themselves, but himself contriving all, providing all, doing and suffering all, that was needful for this great purpose. Being himself the creditor, the payer, and payer of the debt.—How was all this brought to pass? By not imputing the trespasses unto us! The sinner's heart

upon himself ; bearing them all, in his own body, upon the tree ; and sustaining the vengeance, due to all our crimes. Thus was the holy ONE and the just *made sin for us ; that we, sinful dust and ashes, might, in the very same manner, be made the righteousness of GOD in him.* The former could be only by imputation ; and so only can be the latter.

If men talk of being accepted for CHRIST's sake, yet reject the imputation of righteousness, they must have very inadequate notions, concerning the relation which CHRIST bears to his people, and the nature of his mediatorial undertaking.—Does this seem obscure ? I explain myself. — A person may conduct himself so honorably and excellently, as, on account of his worthy deeds, to obtain favour in behalf of another. And this, without being his surety, or any thing like his proper righteousness. Witness the famous instance of the two brothers, *Amyntas* and *Achylus*. The former, was a gallant hero ; who exposed his life, and lost his arm, in the defence of his country. The latter, was an abandoned and infamous profligate, whose crime, had brought him to the bar of public justice. The hero, on the day of trial, appeared as an advocate for his brother. He spoke nothing, but only lifted up to view the maimed and dismembered arm. This silent oratory struck the assembly ; and pleaded so powerfully, that the criminal was unanimously acquitted.—Here was an acquittal of one, in consideration of the merits of another. But then the obnoxious party had no special interest in those merits. They were not acquired or exercised, with a particular reference to his good. He could not say, they are mine. Neither did they make him, in any degree, or in any sense, righteous.—Whereas, the reverse of all this is true, with regard to JESUS CHRIST, and justified sinners. This you and I, Sir, have asserted. Let us never retract the good confession. But, as it is the truth of the gospel, let us still and for ever say,

In HIM complete we shine,

Because

Ours is righteousness divine.

Theron, speaking of the terms inherent and imputed, calls them nice distinctions and metaphysical subtilities.—Mr. Wesley makes *Aspasio* apply the deprectiating remark to the active and passive righteousness of CHRIST.—Whereas, he says no such thing. He means no such thing. He is treating of a subject totally different. And was he to maintain such a sentiment, every one must observe, it would entirely overthrow his whole scheme.

“You oblige us to make use of metaphysical subtilities “by confounding these very different ideas, that is, CHRIST’s “active and passive righteousness.”—I could hardly believe my eyes, for some time; though both of them attested, that this was produced as a quotation from pag. 202, 203. In which pages, and for a considerable space, before and after, the subject of debate is the difference between inherent and imputed righteousness.—I was, I own, quite vexed, to see *Aspasio* so mal-treated; his discourse so misrepresented; and so little regard paid to literary justice.—And glad I am, that I did not give vent to my thoughts, just at that instant. I might have been too warm, and not have spared the rod. But upon cooler consideration, I began to recover, and the prescription of *Horace* was of service,

Amara lento temperat Rifu,

I began to call your conduct, not artifice or slight of hand, but incogitancy or thought misapplied. As you had been thinking so long upon the other topic, it dwelt upon your imagination; kept this from your attention; and led you both to mistake and to miscall things. Like a certain preacher, who having lost his fortune in the bubbles of the year 19, and having occasion to mention the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, told his audience, that Pharaoh and his host, were all drowned in the south sea—poor man! he meant the red sea.

Mr. Wesley proceeds: “we do not confound the active “and passive righteousness.”—Does *Aspasio*, Sir? He that considers them particularly and distinctly? He that examines each with a critical and minute exactness? If this be to confound, order and confusion have changed their nature,

“Neither do we separate them.” It is somewhat difficult to understand, what you mean by separating the active and passive righteousness of our LORD.—Separating them, as to their influence? Then you must be sensible, this is never done by *Aspasio*. You cannot but know, that he disclaims such a refinement. He protests against such a practice—Do you mean, treating them as things really distinct, though always uniting their agency? Then I am at a loss to reconcile Mr. Wesley with himself. For in the very next passage, he thus expresses himself. “Through the merits of his life and death, every believer is justified.” Are not the merits of his life here distinguished from the merits of his death? Does not the former expression denote his active, the latter his passive obedience? Or would you be understood to mean? “Through the merits of his life, which are nothing else but the merits of his death.” If you would not speak in this manner, so unworthy of your better judgment, you do the very thing which you blame.—This is done still more apparently, in one of your hymns. Where we see, not only a separation, but a distinct use, and application of the separated subjects.

Grant this, O LORD; for thou hast dy'd,
That I might be forgiven;
Thou hast the righteousness supply'd,
For which I merit heaven.

I could easily excuse Mr. Wesley, for being a little inconsistent with himself; did he not also venture to confront the Apostle, by the following assertion. “Neither have we any authority from scripture, for either thinking or speaking of one separate from the other.”—Does not St. Paul in one passage, speak of the obedience? In another, of the death of CHRIST? Does he not, in one place, enlarge upon the righteousness? In another upon the blood of CHRIST? If so, we have an authority from scripture, we have the example of the chiefest Apostle, for this way of thinking and speaking.

Are not light and heat always united in the sun? Is the naturalist to blame, who considers them distinctly: and

examines each property, in a separate treatise? You would commend this practice in the philosopher, as the way to enter thoroughly into the knowledge of his subject. And why should you explode or censure it, in the christian divine? Are not theological truths as worthy of a circumstantial and accurate investigation, as philosophical? Will they not as amply reward our diligence, and yield as rich advantage to the serious enquirer?

The righteousness which justifies sinners, is already wrought out, says *Aspasio*.—"A crude, unscriptural expression," replies Mr Wesley.—It may be so. But if the expression is plain and true, I will sit down content. This, however, you will allow me to observe; that it is no new one, and is not far from scriptural. Worketh righteousness you know, is a scriptural phrase. Does the word *out* spoil it, or the word *already*? I suppose, the latter may be most offensive. Yet you speak, in this very paragraph, of being "justified by the merits of CHRIST's life and death."—Are not these matters already transacted? Is not the merit of them already perfect? Or can any language express these things more clearly, and affirm them more strongly, than those emphatical words in one of your own hymns?

Let us for this faith contend,
 Sure salvation is its end;
 Heav'n already is begun,
 Everlasting life is won.

Pardon me then, Sir, if I still suspect, that the doctrine and its consequences, rather than the expression and its crudity, awaken your jealousy. If this doctrine be admitted, if the justifying righteousness be already wrought, it must absolutely overturn all your pre-requisites, qualifications, and conditions; conditions of repentance, obedience, and I know not what besides. We must say to every one of them, as *Jehu* said to the messengers of *Joram*: *what hast thou to do with the grand article of justification? Get thee behind me.* Could they be fulfilled, they would come a day too late; like the sickle, when the harvest is reaped.—Could they be fulfilled in all their imaginary dignity, they

would, in this relation, be needless; like a proposal for augmenting the splendour of the sun

"The rightousness, which justifies sinful man, was set on foot, when GOD sent forth his SON, from the habitation of his holiness and glory, to be born of a woman, and made subject to the law.—It was carried on, through the whole course of our SAVIOUR's life; in which he always did such things, as were pleasing to his heavenly FATHER—it was completed, at that ever memorable, that grand period, when the blessed IMMANUEL bowed his dying head; and cried, with a strong triumphant voice, **IT IS FINISHED**"—Upon this extract from Aspasio's discourse, Mr. Wesley exclaims, "O vain philosophy!"—Philosophy! this philosophy, Sir! never did I hear, till this moment, such doctrines ascribed to philosophy. But thus I have heard, and this I believe; that the world, even the learned and philosophic world, by their boasted wisdom knew not GOD; nor GOD's method of salvation, by the sufferings of an innocent, and the obedience of a divine person. Their philosophy prejudiced them against it; pulled them up with a vain conceit of their own sufficiency; and set them at the greatest distance from submitting to the righteousness of GOD.

I wish, Sir, you would shew me, in which of the philosophers I might find these sacred sentiments; or a grain, or a spice, or a savour of them. I have, for a considerable time, laid aside my plato, and have no more inclination to turn over my seneca; because I can see nothing like this divinely precious truth, adorning and enriching their pages. But if you will discover this golden vein in their works, I will immediately renew my acquaintance with them; and will do the philosophers a piece of justice, which Mr. Wesley denies them. I will not call their philosophy vain, but the wisdom of GOD, and the power of GOD.—A righteousness wrought out, and a redemption obtained for us! the former divine! the latter eternal! these, rightly understood, make us beyond all the treasures of literature, wise. These, habitually enjoyed, will, more effectually than all the delineations of morality or exhortations to virtue, render us holy.

A divine righteousness (pardon me for dwelling on my favourite topic) already wrought! a great redemption perfectly finished! and this by the abasement, the ignominy, the indignities: by the cries, the agonies, the blood of our SAVIOUR. Yea, of our GOD, in fashion as a man; in the form of a servant, a slave, an execrable malefactor.—like this, did a thousand philosophers teach? What, like this, do a thousand of their volumes contain? To stab our pride; to tame our fury; and to quench our lust? To kindle our benevolence; to inflame our devotion; to make us, in a word, wise unto salvation?

“The plain truth is, CHRIST lived and tasted death “for every man”—To be sure then, since every man is not saved by him, he lived and died only to make their salvation possible.—From this and other hints, I guess your opinion to be, that CHRIST, by his life and death, obtained only a possibility of salvation. [Which salvation is to become our own, upon performing terms and conditions, bringing with us pre requisites and qualifications]—If I mistake you, Sir, in this case, you have nothing more to do, than simply to deny my supposition. This exculpates you at once. I shall rejoice to hear you say; “as CHRIST “made us, and not we ourselves; in like manner he save “us, and not we ourselves. No human endowments, no “human performances, but CHRIST alone is the author of “eternal salvation.”

Should you reply, true—CHRIST is the author of eternal salvation, but to those only who obey him.—I must then ask; what obedience CHRIST requires? The law says, “do, and live” CHRIST, the end of the law, says; “believe in ME, and live. Be verily persuaded, that I am “sufficient for thy salvation, without any working of thine “at all. Is not the SON, the SON of the most high God, “given unto thee in the divine record? Be satisfied with “his doing and suffering, without wishing for, or thinking “of, any thing more, to procure thy final acceptance?”—Let no one account lightly of this obedience. It is the obedience of faith. The obedience suited to the name JESUS. Obedience to the first and great command of the gospel. Beyond all other expedients, it excludes boasting.

and, at the same time, produces that genuine love, that filial fear, which the law of works requires in vain.

Only to make a thing possible, and to effect it, are widely different. When our king fits out a fleet, and gives his admiral a commission, to harrass the French coasts, and destroy the French shipping, he makes the thing possible.—But to carry this design into execution; to accomplish the enterprize, now become practicable; is a far more arduous task, and a far more honorable achievement. How strangely do those writers derogate from the dignity and glory of the REDEEMER: who would ascribe to him, what corresponds with the former; and attribute to man, what bears a resemblance to the latter!

If CHRIST only made our salvation possible, then we are to execute the plan. We are to take the enemy, to sustain the charge, and silence the battery; we are to climb the steep, to enter the breach, and bring off the standards. And so, in all reason, the honor and praise must be our own.—Whereas, the gospel gives all the honor to the captain of our salvation. He bore the heat and burthen of the dreadful day. He made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness. So that all our officious attempts, like a pinnace arriving after the victory, should be told, it is finished; the great salvation is already wrought. And instead of being dissatisfied or disappointed, methinks, we should rejoice, unfeignedly rejoice, in the accomplishment of the glorious work.

If it should occur to the reader's mind, that the christian life is represented as a warfare; and that we ourselves are commanded to fight, though under the banner of our divine leader; to this doubt I would answer—The Canaanite is still in the land; and we fight, not to gain the country, but only to subdue the rebels.

“Whoever perverts so glorious a doctrine, shews he never believed.”—This may be the substance of what Aspasio maintains. Though not represented so fully or so clearly, as he was expressed himself. However, such a small wrong we will readily excuse. It was done with no sinister intention, but for the sake of brevity.

To this position Mr. *Wesley* replies; "Not so."—That is; they did really and truly believe. But after their belief, they apostatized, and fell from the faith. They were, sometimes, the members of CHRIST, and temples of the HOLY GHOST: but, quickly severed from their divine head, they became the slaves of the devil, and brands for the everlasting burning. Their names were, indeed, written in heaven. But it seems, the heavenly records were less faithful than the parish register. They were quickly erased, and their place in the book of life knew them no more.

Or this—They did as really and truly believe, as those who are now in the mansions of glory. But, after their true knowledge of the name of the LORD JESUS; after their full conviction of his sufficiency and faithfulness for their salvation; even such as inclined and enabled them, to put their trust in him alone, for their acceptance with God; they were disappointed. Though CHRIST called them his sheep, as thus hearing his voice; yet he did not give unto them eternal life, according to his promise. But suffered satan to pluck them out of his hand.

These sentiments have no very probable, much less have they a pleasing or recommending aspect. Let us enquire, whether they comport with St. *John's* determination of the case, speaking of such backsliders, he says, they went out from us, but they were not of us. Mr. *Wesley*, to be consistent with himself, should say on this occasion; "Not so; "they were of you, but they fell away from you."—The apostle proceeds; for, if they had been of us, no doubt, they would have continued with us. Had they been really converted, they would most undoubtedly have continued in our doctrine and fellowship. Their revolt from our doctrine, is a manifest proof, that they never truly received it, nor with their heart believed it. Their departure from our fellowship, is an evident indication, that they were, notwithstanding all their professions, still carnal, and never renewed by grace.

Mr. *Wesley* produces a text from St. *Peter*, with a view to support his objection. They who turn back as a dog to

his vomit, had once escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of CHRIST. Here and elsewhere I perceive the cannon roar, but without feeling the ball.—Before this piece of sacred artillery can be brought to bear upon us, it will be necessary to prove, that the knowledge of CHRIST, or even believing in CHRIST, always signifies true faith. In some places, it certainly does. In other places, it signifies no such thing. *Though I have all knowledge*, says the apostle; yet even with this specious endowment I may be nothing. There is a knowledge, says the same author; which, instead of edifying, or establishing the soul in godliness, puffeth up with pride. We are likewise assured, that Simon the sorcerer, though in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity, yet had knowledge of the things, which concerned the kingdom of GOD, and the name of JESUS CHRIST; nay, that he also believed, yet had neither lot nor portion in the inestimable blessing.

Let us attend to the apostle's manner, and we shall be led to put the same interpretation upon the phrase, as it is used in the passage before us.—These people are not described, like the true believers, to whom he addresses the epistle. Here is no mention of their being partakers of a divine nature; of being born again by the incorruptible seed; or of having their souls purified by the SPIRIT.—They are only said to have escaped the pollutions of the world.—Consequently, their abstaining from such abominations, implies no more than what is called a negative goodness, or a mere external reformation. Their lusts had been restrained only, not subdued. Therefore the unhappy wretches were easily overcome by their old corruptions.—It is farther observable, that St. *Peter*, never considers these persons as new creatures. He calls them by no other name, than the *dog* and the *swine*. Such they were, at first; no better, under all the profession of christianity; and no other, even in their foulest relapses. When they returned again to their vomit, or their filthy practices, they returned to their own.

There is, then, a knowledge of CHRIST, which is only superficial and notional; floats idly on the understanding, but neither penetrates, nor satisfies the heart. There is also

a knowledge of CHRIST, which is wrought by the SPIRIT, and engrafted into the soul; which receives the gift of righteousness, and brings justification into the conscience. The comfort and joy of which, mortify the love of sin, and produce the life of holiness. This knowledge, Sir, may you and I teach; in this knowledge may our hearers and readers abound; and may the divine power give us, by means of this knowledge, all things pertaining to life and godliness!

The goodness of GOD leadeth to repentance.—“This is unquestionably true, says Mr. Wesley. But the nice metaphysical doctrine of imputed righteousness”—Should you not have said, The nice metaphysical *phrase*? Since, as to the *doctrine*, we are, according to your own confession, agreed. Bound therefore, each of us, equally bound to clear it of the consequences, with which it may be charged, by the author of the preservative, or by any other objector.—And as to the phrase, I cannot understand, by what authority Mr. Wesley calls it metaphysical. Theron, it is true, uses the word, and applies it to the present subject. But does not Mr. Wesley know, that Theron often personates an enemy, and speaks the language of unbelief?—Be pleased Sir, to explain your term; and shew, in what sense it is compatible with this article of my faith? “I am acquitted and counted righteous before GOD, only, through the imputation of my SAVIOUR’s obedience and death?” Which is, both in style and sentiment truly evangelical; but, in no degree, that I can discern, metaphysical.

When Mr. Wesley adds; “This leads not to repentance, but to licentiousness;” he speaks what we understand, not what we allow.—Will any one say, that speculative reasoning upon the goodness of GOD, or contemplating it barely in our ideas, leadeth to repentance? But, when we taste and enjoy, when we apply and appropriate, his profusely rich liberality in CHRIST; we are thereby prompted to neglect, abuse, and dishonor our great Benefactor? Or shall it be said? The divine goodness, manifested in common providence and inferior instances, tends to awaken love and work godliness. But the same divine

goodness, shining forth in the most illustrious manifestation, that men or angels ever knew ; shining forth a glory, a richness, a perfection, sufficient to transport heaven and earth with joy unspeakable : this goodness tends to excite contempt of GOD, and to cherish carnal indulgence ? Such an insinuation, so depreciatory to the righteousness of the blessed JESUS, I had much rather have heard in a Jewish synagogue, than have seen in Mr. Wesley's writings.

No, Sir ; this and this alone leadeth a sinner to repentance. Not all the munificence of the DEITY ; neither the rain from heaven, nor fruitful seasons ; neither the fatness of the earth, nor the abundance of the seas ; can take away the enmity of our nature, and reconcile our affections to GOD. Nothing, nothing but a sense of pardon and acceptance, through the work finished on IMMANUEL'S cross.—If you please to review the text, you will not affirm, that the apostle is asserting the efficacious influence of providential goodness on the hearts of men. He is evidently inveighing against the gross and almost general abuse of such bounty. Though it ought, it does not produce gratitude and duty. It would indeed open upright, but it does not thus operate upon depraved minds. No cause is adequate to this effect, but free justification through JESUS CHRIST.

“ The believer cannot but add to his faith, works of righteousness.”—“ During his first love, says Mr. *Wesley*, “ this is often true. But it is not true afterwards, as we “ know and feel by melancholy experience.”—How, Sir ! do you yourself feel this ? Where then is your sinless perfection ? Can they be perfect, whose love ceases to glow, and whose zeal loses its activity ? Does Mr. *Wesley* himself make this confession ? Let me then say with us—and let us say, with invariable steadfastness, and with increasing gratitude—Blessed be GOD for perfection in JESUS CHRIST !

Do you learn, Sir, what is here acknowledged, by observations made upon others ? Then those others, I apprehend, if they do not exercise themselves in good works, either have no faith, and deceive both you and themselves—or else they intermit and discontinue the exertion of their

faith. Which neither detracts from the efficacy of the principle, nor disproves *Aspasio's* opinion. It is not said; the believer never trips, nor falters in the course of his obedience; but, he always adds to his faith, the duties and works of obedience. Whenever the former acts, the latter constantly ensue. So long as we live by the faith of the SON of GOD, we shall not fail to bring forth those fruits of righteousness, which are through JESUS CHRIST.

This is strongly maintained, by *Aspasio*, in another place. "It is as impossible for the sun to be in his meridian height, and not dissipate darkness, or diffuse light; as for faith to exist in the soul, and not exalt the temper, meliorate the conduct."—This is very forcibly applied, in our LORD's interrogation to his disciples; *where is your faith?* I must be dormant and inactive, like the sap of the trees in winter, or like the faculty of reasoning in sleep. Otherwise, it would banish your fears, even amidst the raging storm; and produce an undaunted confidence in GOD your SAVIOUR.—The design of all this, is, to evince the wisdom of the gospel, which lays such a stress upon faith; so frequently urges the necessity of faith, above and before all things; representing it, as the principal work of the divine SPIRIT, and the great instrument of receiving salvation.—Hence it appears, that the sacred plan is not formed in vain; much less it is calculated to suppress or discourage real holiness.

"We no longer obey, in order to lay the foundation for our final acceptance." These words I read with pleasure—"That foundation is already laid in the merits of CHRIST." These I contemplate with still greater satisfaction.—But when I come to the following clause, "Yet we obey, in order to our final acceptance through his merits," with disappointment and regret I cry; How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed!

A foundation, for what? *Aspasio* would reply; For pardon, for reconciliation, and for everlasting salvation. For peace of conscience, for access to GOD, for every

spiritual and eternal blessing.—A foundation, of *what kind*? In all respects perfect; incapable of any augmentation; not to be strengthened, enlarged, or improved by all the duties and all the deeds of Prophets, Apostles, martyrs. Because it has omnipotence for its establishment.—A foundation, *for whom*? For sinners; for the vilest and most miserable of sinners. That all guilty and undone wretches may come; and though ever so weary, ever so heavy laden, may cast their burthen upon this rock of ages; in full assurance of finding rest, and obtaining safety.

This is cheating; this is charming. What pity it is, that such an illustrious truth should be clouded, such a precious privilege spoiled, by that ungracious sentence! “We to obey in order to find our final acceptance.”—But is this, Sir, your constant profession? I must do you the justice to own, that you have happier moments, and more becoming apprehensions.—When you join in public worship, this is your humble and just acknowledgement; “Although we be unworthy, through our manifold sins, to offer unto thee any sacrifice; yet we beseech thee to accept this bounden duty and service.”—When you criticise upon Aspasio, the note is changed, and this is the purport of your strain; “We beseech thee to accept us, on account of these our services; for we do them, O LORD, with a professed view to this end.”—To implore acceptance for our duties, confesses them to be mean and contemptible. Whereas, to expect acceptance on their account, strongly intimates their excellency. That they are worthy in a very high degree; so as obtain favour, not for themselves only, but for a miserable creature also, who confesses himself subject to manifold sins.

I said, “on account of”—For, if you obey, *in order to* your final acceptance and eternal life, on account of your own obedience. A poor object displays his sores, and relates his distress, in order to obtain your alms. Does he not then expect your alms on account of his sores, his distress, and his piteous tale?—What a coalition is here, between Mr. Wesley and the subjects of the triple crown! I find the whole Council of Trent establishing his sentiments by their anathematizing decree. These are their

words ; if any one shall say, that the righteous ought not " for their own good works, to expect the eternal reward, " through the merit of JESUS CHRIST, let him be accursed *"—Do you speak of the merit of CHRIST ? So do they. Do you, in some sense, allow CHRIST to be the foundation ? So do they. Are your works to rear the edifice, and perform the most respectable part of the business ? So are theirs.

(By this time, I believe, the thoughtful reader will guess the reason, why you oppose and decry imputed righteousness. You are solicitous, it seems, not barely for works of obedience, but for their value and credit in the affair of salvation ; for their significance and influence, in winning the good-will of JEHOVAH. ' Since this is your notion, you may well be offended at CHRIST's imputed righteousness. This will admit of no partner or coadjutor. This, Sir, in the case of justification, pours contempt upon all your most laborious exercises, and admired attainments. Yea, this being divine and inconceivably excellent, pours all around a blaze of glory, in which all our puny doings are lost, as the stars in the meridian sunshine.

" We obey in order to final acceptance."—Methinks, this discovers no more gratitude, than wisdom. Is it not an officious indignity to that noble goodness, which has set forth JESUS CHRIST for a propitiation ? Is it not a contemptuous disregard of that heavenly voice, which said, with so much solemnity ; *In him I am well pleased with the children of men.*—Does this exalt, does it not degrade the SAVIOUR ? Does it mortify, does it not cherish the pride of man ?—According to this scheme, the merits of our LORD are the foundation, not immediately of our acceptance, but of that situation only, in which we are supposed capable of acquiring it ourselves. They are, in short, no more than a mere pedestal, on which human worth, or rather human vanity may stand exalted, and challenge the favour of heaven.

Ah, Sir ! Acceptance with GOD, is an immensely rich and glorious blessing ; a high and transcendently precious privilege : incomparably too high and glorious, to be obtained, in any degree, by such mean obedience as yours and mine.—The pardon of rebels against the King of Kings ! the reception of leprous sinners into the bosom of heaven ! shall such effects, than which nothing can be greater ; shall such benefits, than which nothing can be richer ; be ascribed to human obedience ? What, but the very distraction of our disease, can have occasioned or can account for a thought, so extreme in absurdity ?—[Shall we, sordid wretches, with our ulcerous sores, our withered limbs, and a stupor over all our faculties ; shall *we* think ourselves able to *do something* for HIM, who needeth not the services of angels ? Nay, to do something considerable enough, to found a claim to that transcendent honor and happiness, the light of his countenance ?]—Our adoration ! our thanksgivings ! our praises ! our prayers ! our preaching ! our sacramental duties ! what are they all but filthy rags* compared with his inconceivable holiness and glory ? What part of his work do we attempt, but we debase it with our deplorable imperfections, or pollute it with our very touch ?—Shame then belongs to us, shame and confusion of face, whenever we look to ourselves or our own performances. While all our comfort, all our hope, is to be derived from the only righteous one JESUS CHRIST.

If we know not enough of our own meanness and impotency, let us listen to the Prophet *Isaiah* †. In order to our acceptance with GOD, he informs us, Lebanon, with all her stately cedars is not sufficient to burn ; nor all the beasts, that range through her extensive shades, sufficient for a burnt offering. Nations, whole nations, avail no more than single persons. Should they unite their abilities, and exert all their efforts, to do something which may recommend them to JEHOVAH ‡ ; all would be mean, in-

* Isa. lxiv. 6.

† Isa. xl. 15, 16, 17.

‡ Do we want to learn the Prophet's aim and design, in this magnificent paragraph ? We may to our great satisfaction consult his sagacious and devout Commentator, *Vitringa*.

effluat, despicable. Mean, as the drop of a bucket, which falls to the ground, and none regards it. Ineffectual, as the dust upon the balance, which wants even that small degree of impetus, necessary to turn the most nicely poised scales. — Despicable, as the atom that floats in the air, and has not weight enough to settle itself on any object. — Should you reply, In all these things there is some, though very little substance. The Prophet farther declares; *That all nations in the world, with all their virtues, accomplishments, and works, would, before the infinitely majestic GOD, be as puffing, less than nothing, yea, vanity itself.* Incapable, absolutely incapable of winning his favour, or doing any thing worthy his notice †. — Blessed therefore, for ever blessed be divine grace, that we have a great High-Priest, in whom GOD is pleased; is well pleased; and his very soul delighteth. Whose sacrifice, and whose work, have merited all the good, that sinners can want, or the ALMIGHTY can bestow.

If we are not daily humbled, nor willing to profess ourselves beholden to divine grace alone; if we still resolve to be principals or partners with the one MEDIATOR, in the purchase of the inestimable jewel, let us fear, lest the LORD of our righteousness resent such a dishonor done to himself; and swear in his wrath, that we shall have neither lot nor not portion in this matter. Of this he has exactly warned us by his Apostle; *If ye be circumcised, CHRIST shall profit you nothing.* What would St. Paul teach us, by this solemn protestation? — That no Jew can be saved? Himself was an Hebrew of the Hebrews. Circumcised the eighth day. — That a christian would, by receiving circumcision after his conversion to CHRIST, forfeit all his privileges? No; for he himself circumcised Timothy, to gain him a fair hearing from the Judaizing bigots. — Or is circumcision here used, by way of synecdoche, for the ceremo-

† May I be allowed to elucidate the noble passage, quoted above? Sure I am, the sentence will be displeased with the digression, unless the annotator fails in the execution, and uses the quotation.

nial law ? Teaching us, that, as the Mosaic rites were now abolished, an attempt to continue the observance of them, would be an unpardonable opposition to the designs of providence ? The charitable compromise, recorded in the xvth to the *Romans*, leads to a different conclusion.—Or did those seducing teachers, who required this conformity from the Gentile converts, require them to renounce CHRIST, and relapse into mere Judaism ? Neither is this at all supposable. They only required such a conformity, “ in order to their acceptance through his merits ; ” which they never rejected, but only placed as a foundation for their own.

What then can be meant by, *CHRIST shall profit you nothing if ye be circumcised* ? If ye make circumcision, or any thing whatever, besides the righteousness of CHRIST, necessary to your acceptance with GOD, ye shall receive no advantage from all that the REDEEMER has done and suffered. This is to halt between works and grace, between CHRIST and self. By this they cast themselves entirely out of the covenant of grace, and must expect no salvation but by denying the whole law.

This is the awful apostolic caution. To which let me subjoin the plain apostolic instruction—*Ye are accepted*, says St. Paul, not partially, but entirely ; not occasionally, but finally, in the BELOVED. The author to the Hebrew affirms ; that CHRIST *had obtained redemption*, not left it to be accomplished, either in greater or smaller measure, by our diligence and duties. No ; he himself hath obtained, both present and final, yea, complete and *eternal redemption for us*. And will you, Sir, ascribe to your own obedience, what the Apostle so expressly ascribes, and so entirely appropriates, to the blessed JESUS ?—The same writer assures us ; That, CHRIST, *by one offering hath perfected for ever, them that are sanctified*. He hath done all that is necessary for their full, perfect, and everlasting acceptation. Yes ; whether it be in life or death ; whether it be in the throne of grace, or the tribunal of judgement ; during the span of time, or through the ages of eternity ; all that is necessary for our perfect acceptation is done. Done by an infinitely better hand, than our own ; by an infinitely better expedient, than any human obedience.

Do I, by these remonstrances, set at nought true holiness? Or suppose a salvation separate from holy obedience? You, Sir, cannot entertain such a supposition; since, in your very last remark, you was dissatisfied with my insisting on the *inseparable* connection of a living faith, and works of righteousness. I honor and prize works of righteousness. We are created in CHRIST JESUS, that we may be able to do good works. And by good works we are to glorify our FATHER which is in heaven.

Only I would have good works know their proper station, and proper office. I am far from setting at nought the services of the hand or the foot. But I should very much disapprove their design; I should utterly despise their pretensions; if they should offer to intrude themselves on the province of the eye, or act as the organs of sight. Apply this simile to the obedience of man, and justification before GOD, or acceptance with GOD; you will then see, in what rank I place, in what esteem I hold, both the one and the other.

As I would have obedience know its proper place, so I would have it take a right form. The obedience you propose, is the obedience of the bond-man, not of the free. A servant, hired to dispatch our business, obeys in order to receive his wages. But the child obeys, because he is believed; because he is the heir; and all things which the father hath, are his.

"Obey in order to acceptance!"—Indeed, Sir, you quite mistake the principle and source of christian obedience. I will refer you to a set of teachers, from whom you need not blush to receive instruction. But as this may demand a very particular consideration, I shall postpone it to some future opportunity.

In the mean time, if you should ask; why I have been so copious upon this point? I answer; Because it is a matter of the utmost importance. A mistake concerning acceptance with GOD, must set in a false light every religious truth, and shed a malignant influence on every religious sentiment.

If you ask! Why I have repeated the obnoxious proposition, almost as frequently as the rams-horns sounded the

fatal blast, on the day when *Jericho* was overthrown? I answer; For the very same purpose. To lay it as low as the fortifications of that devoted city. And I hope, neither Mr. *Wesley*, nor any other, will attempt to rebuild it, lest they lay the foundation thereof, in the dishonor of the blessed REDEEMER; and set up the gates of it, in the distress of precious souls. Both which effects, I am persuaded, are very remote from your intention. That they may be equally remote from your preaching, your writing, and all your doctrine, is the sincere wish of, &c.





LETTER IV.

REV. SIR,

I Had, in the warmth of my concern, almost forgot to take notice of a text, which you produce from *1 Tim.* vi. 17, 18, 19. And, which is somewhat strange, produce as a proof, that the apostle requires christians “to obey, in order to their final acceptance.”

Is *Paul* then become the apostate? and do the curses which he has denounced against the seducers of the *Galatian* converts, fall at length on his own head? He placed *Timothy* at *Ephesus*, as a bulwark against the encroachments of other doctrines. Was it with a reserve for liberties of this kind, which he himself should take? Can we think his mind so much altered, since he told those very *Ephesians*, that, without seeking acceptance through their obedience, *they were already accepted in the BELOVED?* Does he now retract the blessed truth? advising the rich, to lay a cloud of golden dust, that it may cover their sins, and waft them to the skies? at the same time, excluding the poor from the fellowship of this new gospel, and the hope of glory. Is he grown ashamed of that righteousness of GOD, which, he assured the *Romans*, was the power of GOD unto salvation, only through believing? And are we, Sir, grown weary of that pure doctrine, which was restored to us, by our glorious reformers? Are we willing to give up the depositum, and return to the more than Egyptian darkness of friars and monks? with whom

— — *Cælum est venale DEUS que ?*

But to the point.—I shall transcribe the text, and add a short paraphrase. Which may, perhaps, explain the meaning, and best refute the objection. Charge them that are rich in this world, that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation, that they may lay hold on eternal life. Charge them, those believers among you, who are rich in this world; that they do good; that, as members of CHRIST, they shew kindness, and exercise beneficence to others. That they be rich in good works, abounding in those works and labours of love, which flow from faith, or a comfortable persuasion of their interest in CHRIST. Ready to distribute, on all proper occasions, with cheerfulness and delight; as counting it more blessed to give, than receive. Willing, even without solicitation, to communicate; and not only embracing, but seeking every opportunity of relieving the necessitous. Lightly esteeming all that is called wealth here below; and laying up in store for themselves another kind of treasure, [even CHRIST; who is the pearl of price, and the true riches.] This will be a good foundation of hope, of comfort, and joy: against the time to come, whether it be the trying scene of sickness, the awful hour of death, or the more tremendous day of judgment. That, placing their affections on him, and having their treasure in him, they may be found wise merchants. Not grasping uncertainties and shadows, but laying fast hold on sure and substantial possessions; even on eternal life.

We establish the law: we provide for its honor by the perfect obedience of CHRIST; says Aspasio.—“Can you possibly think, replies Mr. Wesley, that St. Paul meant this?”—Before I answer this question, give me leave to ask another. Have you Sir, done justice to Aspasio? Is what you quote, the whole of his interpretation? Have you not secreted a sentence, which speaks the very thing, you blame for omitting?

A member of the House of Commons, haranguing the honorable assembly, took the liberty to assert "The gentlemen in the ministerial interest, never propose any thing for the good of their country."—This was no sooner uttered, than a warm partizan of the other side, complained loudly of calumny and scandal. Hold, Sir, for a moment, said the interrupted orator. Let me just finish my sentence, and then give vent to your vehement invectives. My intention was to have added ; "but we in the opposition readily agree to their measures."—Upon hearing this explanation, the House smiled, and the hasty zealot sat down ashamed.

Let me produce the whole period, now under consideration. Then I believe, the reader will allow, that Mr. *Wesley* has imitated this hasty gentleman, in one instance ; and whether he has not some reason to imitate him in another, I shall leave to his own determination.—Immediately after the display of free justification, or of righteousness imputed without works*, *Aspasio*, aware of the possibility of abusing his doctrine, asserts the indispensable necessity of holiness. This done, as quite cleared from the accusation, he triumphs with the Apostle "Do we then make void the law, through faith, in the imputed righteousness of our LORD ? GOD forbid ! Yea, we establish the law. Considered as the original covenant of life ; we provide for its honor, by the perfect obedience of CHRIST. Considered as the invariable standard of duty ; we enforce its observance, by the most rational, manly, and endearing motives †."—Here, Sir, was hardly any room for the precipitancy of interruption, because the whole passage lay before you, and it is a little surprising, that you should see and animadvert upon the former clause ; yet neither see, nor regard the clause ; immediately following.

* Rom. iv. 6.

† Theron and Aspasio, Vol I p. 209.

“ Did such a thought (of establishing the law, by the atonement and righteousness of CHRIST) ever enter in— to St. Paul’s mind ?”—Let the preceeding context determine. Has the Apostle been opening the true sense of the precepts, that they might be rightly understood ? Has he been inculcating the inviolable obligation of the precepts, that they might be duly practised ? Has he not been asserting a justification absolutely free, effected by the righteousness of GOD, without any coagency from the righteousness of man ? Does he not, in the last words, professedly encounter the objection, which, in every age, has been raised against this sacred doctrine ? “ Hereby you neglect and dishonor the divine law ” No ; says the inspired apologist, the law is hereby established, and shewn to be more stable than earth or heaven. The grand legislator himself shall be humbled to its obedience ; the GOD who gave the law, shall bleed for its penalties ; rather than a title fail of its due accomplishment.—Magnified thus, the law indeed is, and made for ever honorable. And though Aspasio does not exclude our practical regards, I do verily, for my own part, believe ; that the former sentiment, against which you exclaim, was uppermost with the Apostle, and is the chief design of the text.

Yes, Sir ; it was the Apostle’s chief design, to shew the perfect consistency of free justification with the most awful glories of the DEITY ; and thereby lay a firm foundation for the hope of a sinner. Had justice, which is the essential glory of GOD’s nature, or the law, which is the revealed glory of GOD’s nature, or the law, which is the revealed glory of his will—had either of these been violated, by the evangelical scheme ; benign and desirable as it is, it must have been utterly rejected ; it could never have taken place ; the whole world must have perished, rather than such an injury have been offered to any of the divine perfections. Therefore St. Paul sweetly teaches, and most satisfactorily proves, that instead of being injured, they are most illustriously displayed by the obedience and death of CHRIST. By this means, JEHOVAH is inflexibly just even in justifying the ungodly and his law is highly exalted,

even in absolving the transgressor that believeth in JESUS.

Here is firm footing ; here is solid rock.

Solid rock, on which the sinner may rest, who is well nigh sunk in despair ; while the waves and billows of divine indignation go over his alarmed soul.—*Firm footing*, on which he may proceed, who sees the importance of his eternal interests, and does not risque them on the vague notion of mere mercy. Dares not give into the modish religion, which leaves such venerable things, as the justice of the most high and the law of the most holy, destitute of their due honor. And leaves such impotent creatures as men, to shift for themselves, by doing the best they can.

“ The plain meaning is, we establish both the true sense “ and the effectual practice of the law : we provide for its “ being both understood and practised in its full extent.” —How can you make this provision, if you set aside the consummate obedience of CHRIST ? Who is the end of the law for righteousness ; for accomplishing that righteousness, which its precepts describe, and its constitution demands.

Can we—can such miserable sinners as *we* ever dream of effectually practising, in its full extent, that law, which condemns every failure ; which requires truth in the inward parts, which insists upon perfection, absolute perfection, in every instance, and on all occasions ; charging us,

With an intense, and unremitted nerve,
To hold a course unfaltering,

to the very end of our lives, and from the beginning of them too.—Attend, I entreat you, Sir, to this most sublime sanctity of the divine law. Then, instead of saying, we provide for its performance in the full extent of its demands ; you will probably say, with a more becoming modesty, we provide for its performance, in a way of willing, chearful, sincere obedience. Still looking unto HIM for justification, who has, in our name, and as our surety, fulfilled it to the very uttermost.

It is, I apprehend, one of your leading errors, that you form low, scanty, inadequate apprehensions of GOD's law. That law, which is a bright representation of his most pure nature; a beautiful draught of his most holy will, and never, since the fall, has been perfectly exemplified in any living character, but only in the man CHRIST JESUS — From this error, many others must unavoidably follow. A disesteem of imputed righteousness, and a conceit of personal perfection. A spirit of legal bondage, and, I fear, a tincture of pharisaical pride.

Should Mr. Wesley ask; why I harbour such a suspicion, concerning his sentiments in this particular? I answer; because, here, he speaks of practising this law, which is so exceeding broad, in its full extent. Because, elsewhere, he represents the violations of this law, whose least tittle is of greater dignity than heaven and earth, as small matters; as petty offences; or, to use his own words, as "things not exactly right."—But more of this hereafter.

Aspasio, to vindicate the equity of the future judgment, declares; "I see nothing arbitrary in this procedure; but "an admirable mixture of just severity, and free goodness. "On those, who reject the atonement, just severity. To "those, who rely on their SAVIOUR, free goodness."—Mr. Wesley, as though he would exculpate the ungodly, asks, "was it ever possible for them, not to reject?"—What says our infallible councilor! the TEACHER sent from GOD? *They will not come to ME, that they may have life.* They rejected his counsel. They would not cease from their own works, and betake themselves wholly to the righteousness of CHRIST. This method of salvation they disliked. It was foolishness unto them. Therefore, they were disobedient to the heavenly call.—Does this take away their guilt? Must GOD be reckoned unjust in punishing, because men are obstinate in their unbelief?

GOD does not require me, as you too injuriously hint, to "touch heaven with my hand," in order to escape damnation. But he invites and requires me, to accept of CHRIST and his salvation. It, intert upon any imaginary accomplishments of my own, I over look the gift; or if, eager in the pursuit of worldly gratifications, I trample upon

it; is not the fault entirely my own? Does it not proceed from the folly of my mind, or the bad disposition of my heart; and leave my conduct without excuse?

Justification is complete, the first moment we believe; and is incapable of augmentation. Thus *Aspasius* speaks.—Thus Mr. *Wesley* replies, “not so.”—And has he, for his authority, a single text of scripture? No; but the whole council of Trent. One of these canons dogmatizes in this manner. “If any shall affirm, that righteousness received is “not preserved, and increased likewise, by good works; “but that good works are only the fruits and signs of justification obtained, not the means of increasing it also, “let him be accursed.”—I am sorry, Sir, to see you again in such company. And I would hope, if it were not an unhandsome reflection, you did not know your associates. Yet it is strange, that a protestant divine should have been so inattentive, to the main part of his character; or should be able to forget, that complete justification, through the righteousness of our LORD alone, is the very essence, soul, and glory of the reformation.

But let us examine the point.—Justification, I apprehend, is one single act of divine grace. It must, therefore, be either done, or undone. If done, in my very idea of the act, it includes completeness. So that to speak of incomplete justification, is a contradiction in terms. Like speaking of dark sunshine, or a round square.

An incomplete justification seems, in the very nature of things, to be an absolute impossibility. Even an earthly judge cannot justify, where there is the least departure from integrity. He may overlook; he may shew clemency; he may forgive. But he cannot, in such a case, pronounce righteous. Much less can we suppose, that justification should take place before an infinitely pure and jealous GOD, unless all guilt be done away, and the person be rendered *completely righteous*.

Besides; can that justification be other than complete, which is brought to pass by the most majestic SON of GOD?

By his perfectly holy nature, by his infinitely precious sufferings; and by his inconceivably sacrificial obedience? This, if any thing in the world, must be absolutely complete; beyond compare, and beyond imagination complete; to speak all in a word, complete in proportion to the dignity, perfection, and glory of the accomplisher.

Is any such notion, as an incomplete justification, to be found in the bible; St. Paul says, *whosoever believeth is justified*; to all intents and purposes justified. No, says Mr. Wesley; he may be justified only in part or by halves. He that believeth, adds the apostle, is justified from all things. No, replies Mr. Wesley; many that believe, especially in the infancy of their faith, are justified only from some things. There is no necessity, that justification should be complete, when or where-ever it exists.

Is there no necessity? Why then does the voice of inspiration assert; that the righteousness of GOD, is upon them that believe? Can a man have that incomparably magnificent righteousness, and yet be incompletely justified?—Does not the same inspired writer declare—That this perfect and divine righteousness is upon all; not upon some only, but upon all believers? Whether they be weak or strong; whether in the first moments of their conversion, or in the last stage of their warfare.—Yes; and he farther assures us, that there is no difference. No difference, with regard to the righteousness itself; for it is the one everlasting righteousness of the incarnate GOD. No difference, as to the reality of its imputation for it is unto all, and upon all. No difference, in the way of receiving it; which is by faith in JESUS CHRIST. Consequently, no difference in the fruits or effects; which are pardon and acceptance, free and full justification.

Is Mr. Wesley, like the *Popish* party, an advocate for a first, for a second, for I know not how many justifications? According to this scheme indeed, justification may be an incomplete thing. But the misfortune attending this scheme is, that it has no foundation in scripture. The scripture knows nothing of it; the scripture declares against it; and acknowledges, as but one faith, but one baptism, so but one justification.

This is the grand scriptural maxim ; *HE hath by one oblation, perfected for ever, them that are sanctified.* The oblation is one, needing no repetition, and no appendage. It does not partially accomplish, but perfects the business of justification. Perfects it, not at the last only, but from first to last ; yea, for ever and ever. In behalf of all those, who are sanctified ; or made partakers of this great sacrifice, and this divine atonement.

This is the fine scriptural illustration ; *The heir, even while he is a child, is lord of all.* You have perhaps, a son born. Upon this child you multiply your favours and caresses. He grows in wisdom and stature. Yet neither your favours, nor his growth, add any thing to his sonship, nor augment his right to your inheritance. With both these he was invested, the first moment he drew breath. So, we are no sooner justified, than we are heirs ; *heirs of GOD, and joint heirs with CHRIST.* The preception and enjoyment of this privilege may increase. But the privilege itself, like the birth-right of the first born, is incapable of augmentation.

Would Mr. Wesley, with the followers of *Arminius*, exclude the righteousness of *CHRIST* ; and introduce something of man's, as the efficient, or as a concurrent, clause of justification ? Then likewise his notion of a gradual, a variable, an incomplete justification, must ensue. Whether it be faith, which he would introduce for this purpose, or repentance, or sincere obedience, or whatever else he pleases ; according to the measure of these works or graces, must be the degree of justification. And not only as to different persons, but as to the same person, at different times.

Farther ; since all these endowments are, so long as we continue in the present state, imperfect ; our justification must, according to this plan, unavoidably partake of their imperfections. It cannot be entire and lacking nothing, till mortality is swallowed up of life.—But how contrary is this to a cloud of witnesses from the scriptures ! *ye are, even now, justified.* *He hath, even in this present time,*

reconciled you to GOD. Through the birth and death of IMMANUEL, there is not only peace on earth, but goodwill towards men; favour, complacency, and love, from the holy GOD, to the fallen soul. And is not this complete justification?

"There may be as many degrees in the favour, as in the 'image of GOD.'—This objection turns upon a supposition, that the favour of GOD towards us, is occasioned by the image of GOD in us. Which is the doctrine of the law; the very language of Heathenism; and has not a savour of that gospel, in which CHRIST is all. And I think myself more concerned, to remove such very prejudicial mistakes, than to sift and adjust any nice speculations, relating to degrees of the divine favour. *Aspasio* has touched this point. Referring you to his observation, I shall confine myself to a more interesting subject.

It is CHRIST, who has redeemed us to GOD, to the favour and fruition of GOD, by his blood. By his blood alone, without any aid from our goodness, or any co-operation from any creature.—His work pleases GOD. His work magnifies the law. His work is incomparably the noblest of all things in heaven or earth. This therefore is our recommendation to the divine majesty. Interested in this, we stand perfectly righteous before the KING immortal, and shall be eternally acceptable in his sight. It was only on account of *Abraham's* supplication, that GOD shewed compassion to *Abimelech*. It was only on account of *Job's* intercession, that the LORD was pacified towards his three friends. And it is only on account of CHRIST's righteousness, that the HIGH and HOLY ONE beholds any child of *Adam* with complacency and delight. To JESUS alone belongs the honor of reconciling, justifying, saving the innumerable millions of redeemed sinners. And is not the LAMB that was slain, worthy to be thus honored, and thus exalted?

Is then our own internal and external goodness of no avail in this matter?—Let us hear the eloquent *Isaiah*, the evangelist of the Jewish Church. "The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down; and the LORD," the LORD JESUS.

CHRIST, alone, shall be exalted in that day.—Does this text, it may be said, relate to the gospel, and the ease of acceptance with GOD? Or is it possible to make what follows, consistent with such an interpretation?—Let us see, whether it be not, by the HOLY GHOST himself, made perfectly consistent with such a sense.

“The day of the LORD of hosts, in the prophetic scriptures, generally and principally signifies the time of the gospel-dispensation. When the LORD puts the finishing hand to his revelation; gives the brightest display of his grace; and gathers together all things in CHRIST.

This day, and its influence, shall cause a wonderful revolution in, what is called, the religious, virtuous, moral world. It shall fall like a thunderbolt upon every idol, set up in the hearts of men; shall prove their wisdom to be folly; their ability to be impotence; all their works to be worthless.

This prophecy, being so repugnant to our notions, and so disgusting to our inclinations, is asserted and enforced with the greatest particularity, both as to persons and to things.

As to persons.—“For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be open”—whom? Upon the sordid wretch, or the scandalous sinner? Rather upon every one that is proud and lofty in his own conceit; pluming himself with the notion of some imaginary pre-eminence above his neighbour. It shall be likewise upon every one that is lifted up in the esteem of others. Either on account of Roman virtue, or Athenian philosophy, or Pharisaical zeal. And, notwithstanding his aspiring pretensions, or glittering accomplishments, he shall be brought low; shall be degraded to the rank of a lost, undone helpless sinner.

So that none shall have it in his power to say, “I am better than thou. I stand upon more honorable terms with my MAKER, and am a fitter object for his favour.” They shall all be like prisoners, confined in the same dungeon, and liable to the same condemnation. Every one of them equally destitute of any plea for justification; and all of them, as to acceptance with their CREATOR, without any difference. No difference, in this respect, between the

accomplished gentleman, and the infamous scoundrel; no difference between the virtuous lady, and the vile prostitute. No difference at all, as to the way and manner of their obtaining salvation. So that the whole may appear to be of grace.

As to *things*.—This part of the subject is illustrated by a grand assemblage of images; comprehending all that is most distinguishable in the visible creation, and denoting whatever is most admired or celebrated among the sons of men.—Oaks and cedars are the most stately productions of vegetable nature, Therefore the day shall be upon all the oaks of Bashan.—Hills and mountains are the most conspicuous and majestic elevations of the earth. Therefore the day shall be upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up.—Towers and cities are the most magnificent works of human art. Therefore the day shall be upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall.—The ships of Tarshish are put for the wealth, the advantages, and the various improvements, procured by navigation and commerce. Pleasant pictures may represent every elegant and refined embellishment of civil life.—The whole collection of metaphors, seem to express all these attainments, possessions, and excellencies, which are supposed to add dignity to our nature, or stability to our hopes; to constitute a portion, in which we ourselves may rest satisfied, or a recommendation, which may entitle us to the favor of heaven.

Yet all these things, before the requirements of GOD's law, and before the revelation of his righteousness, shall be eclipsed and disgraced. Thrown to the bats, and consigned over to obscurity; thrown to the moles, and trampled into the dust. So that in the pursuit of eternal life, none shall regard them; or else regard them, only to despise them.

Thus says the Prophet a second time—To render the work of humiliation effectual, he redoubles his blow. May our whole souls feel the energy of his vigorous expressions! Thus shall the loftiness of man be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be laid low. All notion of personal excellency set aside, they shall be base and vile in

their own eyes. Acknowledge the impossibility of being reconciled by any duties of their own, and place all their confidence on the propitiating death and meritorious obedience of JESUS CHRIST. They less than nothing ; HE all in all.

With this important sentiment I close my letter ; not without an ardent wish, that it may sink into our thoughts, and dwell upon both our hearts.

Yours, &c,





LETTER V.

· REV. SIR,

YOUR last, and several of your other objections, appear more like notes and memorandums, than a just plea to the public, or a satisfactory explanation of your opinion. They have rather the air of a caveat, than a confutation ; and we are often at a loss to discern, how far your remonstrance is either forcible or apposite.

Brief negatives, laconic assertions, and quick interrogatories, opened by no pertinent illustrations, supported by no scriptural authority, are more likely to stagger, stun, and puzzle, than to settle our notions in religion. You seem, Sir, to have forgotten, that propositions are not to be established, with the same ease, as doubts are started. And therefore have contented yourself with a brevity, which produces but little conviction, and more than a little obscurity.

This brevity of yours, is the cause, and I hope, will be the excuse, of my prolixity. Which, I perceive, is growing upon my hands, much more than I intended. If you had been pleased to shew your arguments at full length, and to accompany with proof your glosses upon scripture, the reader would then have been able to determine the preponderating evidence, between yourself and Aspasio. And my trouble had been considerably lessened, perhaps quite spared.

An instance of the foregoing remark, is the objection which follows.—*St. Paul* often mentions a righteousness imputed, says *Aspasio*, “Not a righteousness, says *Mr. Wesley*; never once; but simply righteousness.”—*St. Paul* mentions the righteousness which is imputed, both with and without the Greek article. And do neither of these signify a righteousness? This is a piece of criticism, as new to me, as it is nice in itself.—Besides, where is the difference between a righteousness, and righteousness?—Is not every righteousness, a righteousness?—Is not every person a person? And every prodigious refinement, a prodigious refinement? I thought, *Mr. Wesley*, had known how to employ his time better than in splitting, or attempting to split hairs.

To what purpose, Sir, is this excessive refinement? Many of your readers, I apprehend, will find it difficult to conjecture. For my own part, I freely confess, that I could not, for a considerable time discern your aim. Nor can I even now, discover any other design, than a forced endeavour, to exclude the righteousness of CHRIST; and introduce a mistaken something of your own, to officiate in its stead. As the thread of your criticism is spun extremely fine, we must examine it with the closest attention. But first let me just take notice—

That *Aspasio*, in consequence of his observation, deduced from the apostle's language, asks; what or whose righteousness can this be? To which *Mr. Wesley* answers; “he tells you himself; faith is imputed for righteousness.” But have you never read *Aspasio*'s interpretation of this text? If not, be so impartial, as to cast your eye upon the tenth dialogue. There he considers this passage at large, and lays before you his exposition of the words. Not imposing it, without assigning a reason. But together with his exposition, presenting you with the grounds of his opinion. If you can overthrow them, try your strength and your skill. They stand ready to receive your attack; being, at present, in full possession of the field.

However, if you will not advert to his thoughts; allow me, if I can, to penetrate yours. “*St. Paul* never mentions a righteousness, but simply righteousness.” Thus, I

" presume, you argue—Not a righteousness ; that might
 " seem to denote some ~~real~~ righteousness ; some actual
 " conformity to the divine law, imputed to sinners for their
 " justification — Whereas, ~~it is~~ the substitute, instead of
 " this real righteousness ; it faith is all that to us, which
 " our own obedience, to the law, should have been ; and I
 " which Aspasio supposes, the righteousness of CHRIST
 " is appointed to be ; it faith itself be all this to us, then
 " we are made righteous without a righteousness. Some-
 " thing is accounted to us for righteousness, which is really
 " no such thing.—Then, we shall be under no necessity of
 " submitting to the righteousness of our GOD and SAVI-
 " OUR, but may easily be furnished out of our own
 " stock."

Is not this, or something like this, your way of reason-
 ing ? Do you not, in this manner, understand faith, im-
 plied for righteousness ? Not as deriving all the efficacy, all
 its significance, from its most magnificent object, but as
 being itself the efficient of justification ; the very thing, for
 which we are accepted. In opposition to the wicked
 " and vain commentaries of the *Culivists*, which say, that
 " a I this is resident in CHRIST, and apprehended by
 " faith."

This led me to use that singular expression, " a mistaken
 " something." Since this is an egregious mistake of faith,
 of its nature, its end, its import,—Of its nature. For, it is
 a going out of self, and a flying to CHRIST, for pardon,
 for peace, and for every spiritual blessing.—Of its end.
 For it is ordained, to pre-clude all boasting. That itself
 must be nothing. That the grace of GOD, and the right-
 eousness of CHRIST, may be all in all. Of its import.
 For it says, according to the Prophet ; In the LORD, not
 in my righteousness, I righteousness. It would ex-ostulate, in
 the words of the Apostle, with its over-weening and doat-
 ing admirers ; ye men of Israel, why look ye so earnestly
 on me, as though by my own power or dignity, I had ac-
 cured you, and rendered you accepted ? The
 GOD of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has glorified me

SON JESUS, and appropriated this honor to his obedience and death. In the matter of justification, it is my business not to furnish a contingent, not to supply any part, but to receive the whole from his fullness.

On CHRIST's death sinners are to rely, as the cause of their forgiveness; on CHRIST's obedience, as the ground of their acceptance. "How does this agree with pag. 59?"—Be pleased to turn back, Sir; and with a very little attention, you will perceive the agreement. Then let me desire you to turn inward; and you will, probably, discern more than a little ingenuity, in your own procedure. Since you resolve to stop your ears against the author's explanation and restriction of his own meaning*.—If you was examining a mathematical system, you would always carry in your memory, the leading problems or introductory axioms. If you did not, your own judgement would blame you. And when you neglect to do the same, in canvassing a theological treatise, does not your own conscience reprove you?

Our LORD commends such kind of beneficence only, as were exercised to a disciple. Here Mr. Wesley asks; "Is not this a slip of the pen?"—Read the passage, Sir, and answer yourself. What are our LORD's words? *Inasmuch as ye have done it to these my brethren.* Have you not then as much reason, to charge our divine MASTER with a slip of the tongue, as to charge Aspasio with a slip of the pen? It is undeniably plain, that he does in fact commend only such kinds of beneficence, as was exercised towards his brethren. And I presume, you will readily grant that his brethren, the nobler relation, cannot be more extensive than his disciples, the inferior.

"Will not our LORD then commend all kinds of beneficence, provided, &c."—Excuse my cutting short your

* In pag. 59. "Of the obedience and death of CHRIST, professedly declares, "However, I repeat, I may happen to express myself, I never consider them, speaking in the exclusive sense, but would always have them understood, as a grand and glorious issue. Looking upon our SAVIOUR's universal obedience, which was carried on through his life, and continued in his death, as the ground of our hope, in its collective sense, as the ground of our hope, and the

speech. You are rambling from the point. What CHRIST, will do, is quite another question. Aspasio neither denies, nor affirms any thing, on this subject. All that he considers is, what appears to be really done, in that particular description of the last day, and its awful process. Nor will he scruple to affirm, a second time, that our LORD applauds such acts of beneficence only, as were exercised to a disciple; to believers; to his brethren.

The righteous judge specifies this sort of munificence, because it is a sure indication of one begotten by the word of truth. It is a test, which none but the saints and faithful in CHRIST JESUS will come up to. And a christian is most properly distinguished, not by what he does in common with others, but by the different principle from which he acts—Of this particularity Aspasio takes notice, on purpose to warn, as well as to exhort his readers. Exhort them, that they may abound in works of generosity. Warn them, that their works may spring from the right source, faith in the divine REDEEMER.

“ You are not willing to call works of beneficence, “ though exercised to a Samaritan or a Heathen,” transient bubbles.—No more is Aspasio, in the sense and manner, you insinuate. He calls them such, not absolutely, but relatively. Not in themselves, but with respect to an affair, infinitely too great for them to transact, either in whole or in part. In this view (as relative to justification) St Paul calls them dung, which is despicable and sordid. Surely then Aspasio may call them bubbles, which are shewy but insignificant.—I don't call the desk, on which I write, a mere egg shell. Yet I should not hesitate to say; It is scanty as an egg shell, if appointed to transport an army to the Indies; feeble as an egg shell, if set up as a wall of munition, against a battery of cannon.

How must CHRIST exceed the Scribes and Pharisees; To this Aspasio replies. Not only in being sincere; in having respect to all GOD's commandments, but also in possessing a complete righteousness. Nor can this be any thing less, than the perfect obedience of our great MEDIATOR.—Did our LORD mean this? nothing less. But not so easily proved.—Yes,

you add — "He specifies in the following parts of his sermon, the various instances, wherein the righteousness of a Christian exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees." — He does so. But is it not an absolutely complete righteousness? A meekness without the least emotion of resentment, — A purity, without the least stain of evil conscience — A love, a long suffering, a perfection, such as our FATHER which is in heaven exercises. Now if it is does not exceed the righteousness of all the Christians in the world, or if this is to be found in any character, save only in the character of our great MEDIATOR, I retract, most freely retract my opinion.

The discourse relates to that righteousness, by which we are saved; or, by virtue of which, we enter into the kingdom of heaven*. And why, Sir, why will you not resign the honor of obtaining salvation, to the most blessed IMMANUEL's blood and obedience? Why will you edge up your people's way to the immortal mansions, by teaching them to depend upon duties and attainments of their own? — Should any one, hearing this doctrine, that the law of the ten commandments requires a perfect, sinless obedience; that none can be delivered from the wrath to come, or enjoy eternal life, without this unflinching, perfect obedience; should such a one, struck with surprise and anxiety, enquire: "Who then can be saved?" What answer would Mr. *Wesley* give? — The answer we would make, is obvious and full of consolation. "No man, by his own performances. But salvation is to be sought, salvation is to be obtained, by the righteousness of another. Even by the consummate obedience of our LORD JESUS CHRIST."

He brings this specious hypocrite to the test. — "How does it appear, you ask, that this young ruler was a hypocrite?" — It appears from his conduct. For, he came kneeling to our SAVIOUR, as one sincerely desirous of learning his duty, yet, when instructed in it, he would not perform it. — It appears from your own character of him — You say, "he loved the world." Then the love of the

FATHER was not in him. That he pretended to the love of GOD, is evident from his own words. That he had no real love, is certain from your own acknowledgment. If pretence, without reality, be not hypocrisy, please to inform us, what is — It is farther apparent, from your disputation on the case. "Therefore he could not keep any of the commandments in their spiritual sense." And it is a sure, as well as important truth, that whoever pretends to keep the commandments, yet does not keep them in their spiritual meaning, is a deceiver of himself; a deceiver of others; a hypocrite.

"The keeping of the commandments, says Mr. Wesley, "is undoubtedly the way to, though not the cause of eternal life." — How then came it to pass, that our LORD JESUS CHRIST, should declare? *I am the way.* The way, to what? To the favour of GOD; to the fruition of GOD; to every spiritual blessing; or in other words, to eternal life — After such a claim, from such a person, may I not, without the imputation of undue confidence, deny your assertion in your own form of speech? "The keeping of the commandments" *undoubtedly* cannot be the way "to eternal life," since this is an honor, this is a prerogative, which the all-glorious REDEEMER has challenged to himself.

Hence your distinction, between the *way* to, and the *cause* of, appears to have no countenance from scripture. And will it not, upon a review, appear to have as little support from reason? Cast your eye upon yonder bridge. It is thrown over a deep and wide river. It is the way, the only way, whereby I cross the water, and arrive at the opposite bank. If so, is it not likewise the cause of my safe arrival on the other side? There may be, in this case, other causes, concomitant or subordinate. But the bridge is the grand one; that which every body chiefly regards; and to which my passage is always ascribed.

CHRIST therefore is the way, the only way, to life and immortality. By his precious blood, and by his divine righteousness, we pass the gulph of wrath and destruction. By the things which he has done, by the pains which he has endured, we enter the realms of peace and joy. Accord-

ingly, we are *exhorted to walk in him*, and are assured, that as many as walk in this way, *shall renew their strength*. This is, what the apostle calls, *the new and living way*. This is, what the Palmist styles, *the way of holiness*. And though other ways may seem right unto a man, yet the end thereof are the ways of death.

A doubt, perhaps, may arise in the reader's mind, suggested by the words of the prophet: *an high way shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness*.—True. The way is *CHRIST*, the incarnate GOD, with all his gifts, privileges, and blessings. *It shall be called the way of holiness* *. None can enter and advance therein, yet continue carnal and unclean. All that travel this road, renounce the hidden things of darkness, and do the works of righteousness. It does not indeed find, but it assuredly makes, the passengers righteous. And though holiness is not their way, yet it is a principal part of their business, while the walk in *CHRIST*.

Aspasio, having occasion to speak of *Abraham's* faith, quotes the words of the apostle; *by works his faith was made perfect*. Which he thus explains; "his faith hereby answered its proper end, and appeared to be of the true, the triumphant, the scriptural kind. Since it overcame the world, overcame self, and regarded GOD as all in all."—To this Mr. *Wesley* replies, with the solemnity of a censor, and the authority of a dictator; "No. The natural sense of the words is, by the grace superadded, while he wrought those works, his faith was literally made per-

* *Isa. xxxv. 8* Upon this *Ibid.* Dr. Owen speaks excellently. "CHRIST is the medium of communications that be seen GOD and us. It him we meet; in him we walk. All influences of love, kindness, mercy from GOD to us, are through him; all our returns of love, delight, faith, obedience unto GOD, and all through him. He being that one way, (GOD) to us, promitteth his people. And it is a glorious way, *Isa. xxxv. 8*. And a way of holiness, a way that none can enter in that once enter it. Which he further setteth forth *Isa. xlii. 16*. All other ways, all other paths but this, go down to the chimney of death: they all lead to walk contrary to GOD."

See a treatise entitled *union with GOD*. By JOHN OWEN, D.D. which presents us with the spirit and quintessence of the gospel, with the noblest privileges and strongest constraints to its duty, animating us thereby to all the duties of holy obedience.—Here a copy is added to the truth path. Milk and honey in the cup. Marrow and sweets on the table. In my treatise, the author has done worthily; but in this, I think, he excelleth them all.

"fect"—Your proof Sir. What have you to make good this interpretation? There is not a word in the text about grace super added. This is not assigned as the cause of a perfected faith. Nay, the sacred writer expressly assigns another. By works, says St. James, his faith was made perfect. No, says Mr. Wesley; but by grace superadded. St. James affirms one thing; Mr. Wesley affirms the contrary; and who am I, that I should decide between two such disputants? But I believe, the reader will, without my interposal, easily choose his side.

Perhaps, you will reply; if this is not the true sense, produce a better.—One less opposite to the natural import of the words, and the apparent meaning of the apostle, is already produced. Do you insist upon another? I will then refer you to abler judges.—Shall I send to an expositor, whom you yourself admire? Dr. Doddridge thus comments upon the text. "*His faith was perfected by works; the integrity of it, was made fully apparent, to himself, to angels, to GOD.*"—Shall I remit you to an expositor, who can neither deceive, nor be deceived? The GOD of glory says, *my strength is made perfect in weakness. Made perfect!* how? Is there any such thing, as a super addition to GOD Almighty's power, while he exerts it in behalf of his people? This none can imagine. But it is hereby manifested, to their comfort, and his glory. The same word, is used concerning Abraham's faith, and concerning the GOD of Abraham's strength. Why then should it not be understood in the same sense?

Shall I send you to a familiar illustration? I view, from my window, a young tree. The gardener, when he planted it, told me it was a fruit-tree, a pear tree, a right *Beaute du pays*. It may be such a tree, and have its respective seed in itself. But this did not then appear. If, when Autumn arrives, its branches are laden with fruit, with pears, with that delicious kind of pears, this will be a demonstration of all those properties. This will, not make it such a particular tree; no, nor make it a good and fruitful tree; but only shew it to be of that fine sort, or make its nature, and perfections evident.

St James speaks of the justification of our faith; thus proceeds *Aspasio*. And thus replies Mr. Wesley; not unless you mean by that odd expression, our faith being "made perfect"—I mean such a perfection of faith, as is mentioned above. Other perfections I find not, either in looks or in n. Was faith perfect, in *your* sense of the word, love, joy, and all holiness would be perfect likewise. correspondent to the principle, would be the state of the production. There would be no longer any cause for that petition, which the disciples put up; LORD, increase our faith. Nor for that supplication, which you and I, so long as we continue members of the Church of *England*, must use; give unto us the increase of faith, hope, and charity!

You call the justification of our faith an "odd expression."—Is it not founded on the tenour of the apostle's discourse? Is it not the native result of the apostle's inquiry? *Shew me thy faith. Prove it to be real and unfeigned.*—Prove it by such acts, as demonstrate, you trust in JESUS alone for everlasting life. If it stands this test, we shall acknowledge it to be that precious faith, whose author is GOD, and whose end is salvation.—Is not that a justification of faith, which displays its sincerity, and renders it without rebuke? Somewhat like this, would be reckoned a justification of any person, or of any other thing, and why not of faith?

Something, you see, Sir, may be said, in vindication of this expression. However, if it be thought improper; if it tend to create any confusion in our sentiments; or to draw off our attention from that grand idea, which is peculiar to the word justification, the idea, I mean, of being made righteous before GOD—I freely give it up; I will alter it in my book; and use it no more.

He that doeth righteousness, is righteous. He manifests the truth of his conversion, and justifies his profession from all suspicion of insincerity.—"Nay, says Mr. Wesley, the plain meaning is, he alone is truly righteous, whose faith "worketh by love."—Your exposition may be true, and *Aspasio's* no less true. I leave the reader to determine, which is most exactly suitable to the apostle's arguing.—

He is speaking of the *christian* righteousness. That which renders us righteous before GOD. That which flesh and blood could never have discovered. Which therefore was graciously revealed in the gospel, and is the principal subject of gospel-preaching. As then there were, and always would be, many pretenders to the noble privilege, St. John lays down a maxim or a touchstone, to distinguish the sincere from the hypocrite. *He that uniformly doeth righteousness*, in a way of sanctification; he, and he only, is to be acknowledged by us, as truly *righteous* by way of justification.

Far be it from me, Sir, to be fond of wrangling. Where you hit upon the truth, or come pretty near it, I shall never be eager to oppose. On the contrary, I shall be very desirous to agree: and preserve as much as possible, both the unity of opinion, and the harmony of affection.—Your own interpretation shall take place. Only let your *working* be the sign and fruit of a righteous state, not that which makes or constitutes us righteous. The righteousness of fallen creatures, is not of themselves, but of me, saith the LORD. It is brought in and accomplished by HIM, whom GOD hath set forth to be their MEDIATOR and SURETY. So that we are made righteous, not by doing any thing whatsoever, but solely by believing in JESUS.—Hence it comes to pass, that we really are, what the Apostle affirms, in the following words, *righteous, even as he is righteous*. Not barely righteous, as the moral Heathens, by dint of human resolution. Not barely righteous as the reputable Jews, by the influence of their legal sanctions. But righteous with that very righteousness, which adorns, and exalts, and will eternally distinguish the only begotten SON of GOD.

It remains to be enquired; what faith is most likely to operate, in this excellent and happy manner? I mean to work by love.—Let me illustrate the point by a short apologue; then release the reader from his attention, and the writer from his task.

A certain king had two favourites, whom he honored with his peculiar regard, and enriched with a ceaseless libe-

rality. They both, insensible of their vast obligations, became traitors and rebels. Being convicted of treason against their sovereign, he was determined to overcome their evil with good. Accordingly, when they had nothing to plead in their own behalf, he generously forgave them both. The one he dismissed from prison, and suffered to live unmolested on his private inheritance. The other he restored to all his high preferments, and public employments. He adorned him again with the robe of honor, and admitted him again into the bosom of favour.—Which of them, now, will feel the warmest affection for their sovereign? Which of them will be most ready to serve him on all occasions? And if need be, to hazard even life in his defence?—He, doubtless, on whom most was bestowed.

And is not that person most likely to work and obey, from a principle of love; who believes, that his divine LORD, has not only bore the curse, but fulfilled the law for him? Has given him, not barely an exemption from punishment, but a title to eternal life? Yea; has clothed him with his own most perfect and glorious righteousness. By virtue of which, he will, ere long, be presented faultless before the throne of judgement, and have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom.—Will not the faith of such unspeakably rich grace, pacify the conscience, and purify the heart? Awaken gratitude to our heavenly benefactor, and enkindle zeal for his glory? Cause us to discharge all the duties of our station cheerfully, and withstand every allurements to evil resolutely?

The saints in glory, says Aspasio, ascribe the whole of their salvation to the blood of the LAMB. “So do I, replies Mr. Wesley; and yet I believe, he obtained for all a possibility of salvation.”—Is this objection pertinent? Does Aspasio’s assertion contradict your belief? Does it not compromise, all that you avouch, and much more? Is it possible, that Mr. Wesley, who is such a master of logic, should argue in this manner? “The saints in glory ascribe all their salvation to CHRIST’s blood; therefore he did not obtain a possibility of salvation for all men.” What forced conclusion is this! What wild reasoning is here! Such premises, and such an inference, will probably incline

the reader to think of a sun-beam and a clod, connected with bands of smoke.

Surely, we may say of this faith, what David said of Goliath's sword; *there is none, there is nothing like it.* For all these blessed purposes, it is beyond compare, and I should think, beyond dispute, efficacious — That you, Sir, may know more of this faith, and dispute less against it, is the sincere and fervent wish of, &c.





LETTER VI.

REV. SIR,

AS this letter may probably be pretty long, I shall not increase the prolixity by a "preface; but enter upon it, without any farther introduction.

Whoso doeth these things, saith David, shall never fall—Which *Asnasio* thus interprets, "shall never fall into final apostacy"—You are pleased to reply; "*David* says no such thing. His meaning is, whoso doeth these things to the end shall never fall into hell"—It would be a greater wonder, I must own, if he should. But if he happens to fail, at some times, and in some instances, what becomes of him then?—However, let you and I, Sir, be at as little variance as possible. Where is the extraordinary difference, between yourself and *Asnasio*? If a professor of religion falls into hell, must he not previously fall into final apostacy? And if he falls into final apostacy, must he not inevitably fall into hell?

When you insert the clause, *to the end*, do you interpret? Do you not rather interpolate the sacred text? The words of the Palmist relate to the present time. They contain an encouragement to those, who, at this instant, bring forth the fruits of evangelical righteousness. The encouragement is deduced from the comfortable doctrine of final perseverance. It carries this clearing import; "whosoever believes in JEHOVAH, as laying all his sins upon CHRIST, and giving him eternal life freely, whosoever, from this principle of faith, sincerely loves and willingly

"obeys GOD; he shall never fall."—An immoveable thing never falls, either one way or another. So, this righteous person shall never fall: either into final apostacy, which is the greatest misery here; or into hell, which is the consummation of misery hereafter.

But I begin to apprehend what you mean, and of what you are jealous. Your exclamation unravels all; "How pleasing is this to flesh and blood!"—Under favour, Sir, I cannot conceive, how this doctrine should be pleasing to flesh and blood. Flesh and blood, or corrupt nature, is proud. Any scheme of perseverance, to be accomplished by our own strength, would indeed be agreeable to the vanity of our mind. But a perseverance, founded on the fidelity and the power of GOD; a perseverance, which acknowledges itself owing, not to any human sufficiency, but to an union with CHRIST, and the intercession of CHRIST; this is a disgusting method. This is what the natural man cannot away with. You will find the generality of people utterly averse to it.—Flesh and blood will not submit, either to be made righteous before GOD, by the imputed righteousness of CHRIST; or to be made faithful unto death, by the never-failing faithfulness of CHRIST.—Try your friends; try your followers; try your own heart, on this point.

To the humble believer, I acknowledge, this is a most pleasing and consolatory doctrine. He, who feels his own impotence; who knows the power of his inbred corruptions; and is no stranger to the wiles of his spiritual enemy; he will rejoice in the thought, that *nothing shall pluck him out of his almighty REDEEMER's hand*. That his advocate with the FATHER, will suffer *neither principalities, nor powers, nor life, nor death, nor things present, nor things to come, nor any other creature, to separate him from the love of GOD*.—Without such a persuasion, we might too truly say of the christian's joy, what Solomon said of worldly merriment, *I said of laughter, it is mad; and of mirth, what does it?* If he, who is to day basking in the divine favour, may before the morrow be weltring in a lake of fire; then joy in the HOLY GHOST is unreasonable; and peace, even that peace *which passeth all understanding*.

ing, is chimerical. A building without a basis; at least, *a bawling wall, and a tottering fence.*

Let us examine the doctrine, which Mr. Wesley says, is so pleasing to the flesh and blood; or, in other words, to carnal people.—What is the Thing, which the Psalmist teaches, and *Aspasia* professes? That the persons, who are described in the Psalm *, shall never apostatize, from the true faith, or from true obedience. Is this so agreeable to carnal people? Is it not rather unwarrantable in Mr. Wesley to suppose, that carnal people either possess true faith, or perform true obedience, or can be pleased with either? Especially, since the apostle assures us, that *the carnal mind is not subject to the law of GOD, neither indeed can be.*

Besides; are not the duties mentioned by the Psalmist, offensive to flesh and blood? Do they not require, or imply, the mortification of our carnal appetites, and the discipline of our unruly affections? Can it be a welcome piece of news to flesh and blood, that this mortification shall take place? Instead of being remitted, shall increase? And never, never be discontinued, till mortality is swallowed up of life?—If so, *the old man which is corrupt*, must be pleased with the curb, and the dagger must delight in its own restraint, and its own destruction.—Such a paradox we must believe, before we can espouse Mr. Wesley's notion; that flesh and blood are pleased with the doctrine of a final perseverance in self denial, in righteousness, and true holiness.

“Should your repentance be without a failure, and without a flaw; I must still say to my friend, as our LORD replied to the young ruler, *one thing thou lackest.* In all these acts of humiliation, you have only taken shame to yourself. Whereas, a righteousness is wanting, which

* The xvth Psalm, I apprehend, describes the perfect character. That perfection, which CHRIST readily took; and in the original, when GOD is well pleased. The children of the truth are, by the same SPIRIT, led to imitate his character, according to the measure of their faith. Yet by uncertainty, that when compared with him in their own persons, they have reason to pray, forgive us our trespasses. Though, when considered as clothed with the righteousness of him in CHRIST, they may share themselves in accordance with GOD, and are waiting till the day is out.

"may magnify the law, and make it honorable."—These are *Aspasio's* words; upon which Mr Wesley animadvert. "One thing thou lackest, the imputed righteousness of CHRIST." You cannot think this is the meaning of the "text."—Neither does *Aspasio* affirm this to be the meaning. He only uses the words by way of accommodation. Could you demonstrate, that our LORD intended no such thing, yet the sentence may not improperly express *Aspasio's* opinion. And if so, be not unfit for his use.

However, let us enquire into the exact meaning of the text. A very little search will yield the desired satisfaction. Sell all thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven. Treasure in heaven was what the young gentleman lacked. Could this be any other than CHRIST himself? Is not CHRIST the treasure, hid in the field of the gospel? Is not CHRIST the inheritance, reserved in heaven for us? Is not a communion with CHRIST, and an enjoyment of CHRIST, the supreme felicity of our nature?—*David* was of this mind, when he publicly declared; *whom have I in heaven but thee?*—*St. John* was of this mind, when he solemnly averred; *he that hath the SON, hath life*—Whoever is of another mind, has very inadequate, very unworthy notions of heaven and its happiness.—Now if CHRIST himself was the *one thing* needed, surely his righteousness could not be secluded. His blood and obedience inseparably accompany his person.—He that hath the bridegroom, hath his riches also.

In opposition to this sense, it is affirmed, "*certainly the one thing our LORD meant, was the love of GOD.*"—is *certainly* an eminent blessing. Possessed, I should imagine, only by those, who have first obtained eternal life, by knowing the true GOD and JESUS CHRIST. But does our love of GOD magnify the law; satisfy justice; or obtain heaven? Are we pardoned, are we reconciled; are we justified, on account of our love of GOD?—The young ruler wants *that*, which may open to him the kingdom of heaven; and *that*, whereby he may inherit eternal life.—*Mr. Wesley*, setting aside pardon, reconciliation, justification, together with the one perfect righteousness, which procures them, ascribes all to our love of GOD. And, by

this means, not to the true love, arising from the knowledge of him, as manifested in the gospel; as having first loved us, in granting us remission of sins, freely through JESUS CHRIST. — This notion may pass current at *Rome**, not among the *protestant* churches. Our own church has most expressly disclaimed it. Speaking of CHRIST and his precious blood-shedding, she adds; “whereby *alone* we are made partakers of the kingdom of heaven.”

“Is the obedience of CHRIST sufficient to accomplish our justification?” — Here you would correct both the language, and the doctrine. The language: for you say, “rather I would ask, is the death of CHRIST sufficient to purchase it.” — To purchase justification, you suppose, is more proper and expressive, than to accomplish. As this may seem a strife of words, I shall dismiss it without much solicitude. Only I would transiently observe, that to accomplish, denotes in us than to purchase. It denotes the constituent cause; what the school-men call, the matter of justification; or the very thing which effects it. If your favourite phrase implies all this, let it have the pre-eminence.

Next, you correct the doctrine, by saying; “I would rather ask, is the death of CHRIST insufficient to purchase justification?” — I answer; if you consider the death of CHRIST, as exclusive of his obedience, it is insufficient. If you do not, there is no great reason for your starting a doubt, where we both are agreed. And indeed it is scarcely worth any while to take notice of it. I will therefore return to the distinction, which you think proper to make, between accomplishing and purchasing justification. — Why Sir, would you set aside the former phrase? Does it not imply, that which justifies? That very thing, which commends us to GOD? That very righteousness, in which we stand accepted before him? Does not this way of expres-

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sing guard most effectually against the errors of popery, and exclude all co-efficiency of faith, of works, or any thing else whatever? I said, the errors of popery. For a *Popish* synod will allow, that we are not justified without the righteousness of CHRIST, by which he hath merited justification for us. But declares, at the same time, if any man shall say, we are formally righteous, by that very righteousness, let him be accursed!—According to this which is no very good confession, the righteousness of CHRIST purchases, but does not accomplish, it merits our justification, but does not constitute our justifying righteousness. See, Sir, whither your refinements are leading you.

If you was determined to make this passage faulty, you should have opposed it with the following declaration of your faith; “yet I believe, that CHRIST obtained *no more* than a possibility of salvation for any.” Then you would have something suited to your purpose, but not agreeable, either to sound sense, or sound doctrine—Not to *sound sense*. Your possibility of salvation, is, if people perform the conditions. How then can they ascribe *the whole* glory to CHRIST? At this rate, they do a piece of injustice to their own resolution and diligence; As these, by fulfilling the conditions, had a hand in obtaining the reward, these ought to have a share in receiving the honor.—Not to *sound doctrine*—*Aspasio* believes much more than a possibility of salvation by JESUS CHRIST. He believes a full and complete salvation, according to that noble text, *It is finished*. A salvation, not to be acquired, but absolutely given, according to that precious scripture, *GOD hath given to us eternal life*. Not upon some terms or pre-requisites, but without any condition at all, according to that most gracious invitation, “whoever will, let him take of the water freely.”—This I look upon as sound doctrine. But will your notion of a conditional salvation, proposed by way of bargain, and granted upon terms, comport with this gift of grace?

No more than a possibility of salvation!—Yes, Sir, CHRIST obtained a great and a free salvation. *Great*, for it comprizes the pardon of all sin, original and actual;

a restoration to entire and unalterable favour; together with a title to everlasting life and glory.—This is such a provision for our happiness, as becomes the immense goodness, and inconceivable majesty of an incarnate GOD. Such as not only supplies our wants, and satisfies our desires, but surpasses our very wishes. Transporting us with wonder, and filling us with joy.—To accomplish all this, we may reasonably suppose, nothing less could be sufficient, than the active and passive righteousness of HIM; who is gone into heaven, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.—Since this matchless ransom has been paid; since these grand conditions are performed; there is no obstruction from the divine justice, or the divine truth. All that ineffable and eternal blessedness is now become free: is granted to sinners, to rebels, to the most unworthy; they are allowed, yea, invited to receive it, to possess it, to rejoice in it as their own portion: and without the proviso of any good thing in themselves, purely on account of their SAVIOUR's all-sufficient work.

I read in sacred history of "Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David; how he arose, and smote the Philistines, until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto his sword; and the LORD wrought a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to spoil." And were not these mighty men typical, faintly typical of our almighty REDEEMER? Did not JESUS also arise and work a great victory? Has he not triumphed gloriously over sin, and all our enemies? And what have we to do, but only to return, and divide the spoil, and share the benefits of his conquest?—May we not boldly say? "My sin is done away, because CHRIST has bore it on the cursed tree. I stand accepted before GOD, because CHRIST has finished the righteousness, which renders me unblameable and unrepensible. I shall receive the HOLY GHOST, because CHRIST is my advocate; and prays the FATHER, that he will give me another comforter. This sacred comforter, by shewing me the riches of CHRIST will more and more sanctify my nature." To think and live in this manner, is to take the spoil after our victorious leader.

I, t me close and confirm this sentiment, with a passage from that inimitable penman, the prophet Isaiah. "W", for his remarkable clear views of CHRIST, may almost be admitted into the number of E angels; and for his exquisitely fine descriptions of CHRIST, greatly exceeds all orators and all poets. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from B ziah? This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?—I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine vat?—I have trodden the wine press alone, and of the people there was none with me.

The prophet, like one thrown into a sudden surprise, with a beautiful abruptness, cries out, who is this? What extraordinary appearance discovers itself to my sight? Is it a human, or a divine form, that I behold? He cometh from Edom the country, from Bozrah the capital, of our professed national enemies. Is he for us, or for our adversaries? The first question seems to proceed from a distant and indistinct view. He then takes a nearer survey, and describes the wonderful personage with greater particularity. This that cometh with dyed garments, like some terrible and victorious warrior, that has scarcely sheathed the sword of slaughter. Who is all encrimsoned, and still reeking with the blood of the slain.

The vision becomes clearer. I see him (adds the rapturous prophet) glorious in his apparel. Highly graceful, as well as extremely awful. Bearing in his aspect, in his whole person, in his very dress, the marks of transcendent dignity. Travelling in the greatness of his strength. Not faint with toil, nor wearied with the fatigue of the dreadful action; but like one, that is indefatigable in his zeal, and irresistible in his power; and therefore still pressing forwards, to new victories; still going on, from conquering to conquer.

The majestic object is, all this while, advancing. At length, he approaches near enough, to hold a conference with this devout enquirer. One would naturally expect,

that his speech should be like his aspect, alarming and tremendous. But grace is on his tongue, and his lips drop balm. I that speak in righteousness: all whose words are faithfulness and truth: an immovable foundation for the faith of my people. That speak of righteousness. Of that mysterious righteousness, which is the delight of my FATHER, and the life of the world. To bring in which, is the design of my appearance on earth, and to reveal it is the office of my SPIRIT. By means of this righteousness, I am *mighty to save*: to save thee; to save any lost sinner; to save them, as with the arm of omnipotence, beyond all that they can think, even to the very uttermost.

Here, the prophet seems to be somewhat at a loss, and takes leave to renew his enquiry. If thou art come, not to destroy men's lives, but to save; *wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine vat?* These indicate, not vengeance, but distinction. These are tokens, not of forbearing mercy, but of inexorable vengeance,—'Tis true, replies the illustrious hero, *I have trodden the wine-press* *; I have crushed my toes; I have

* Trodden the wine-press — I can hardly forbear taking notice of the great impropriety, with which this text and this metaphor are frequently used by our theological writers. They apply both to CHRIST, as bruised by his dignity FATHER, and bearing the weight of the indignation, which was due to the sins of mankind. Nothing is more common; than to make this text descriptive of his agony in the garden — It indeed it had been said, I am trodden in the wine-press, the image might not be improper. But when it is said, I have trodden, nothing can be more unsuitable to a state of humiliation and suffering. This phrase evidently denotes conquest and triumph, as a conqueror is vaingloriously and proudly described. It should never therefore be applied to the agonizing, but to the triumphant Saviour, not to Jesus prostrate on the ground, but to Jesus making his foes his footstool.

As I have taken leave to animadvert upon a common mistake, I would also take liberty to pay merit its due honour; by recommending to my reader a poetical version of this passage, given us by Dr. Lowth, in his very elegant work, entitled *De sacra poetica licentia*. Where he understands the text, in the sense suggested above, and translates it, in the very spirit of Virgil. As the lines are few, and the book may not be in the hands of all my readers, I will present them with a transcript.

—Ille patris vites indutus & iram,
Dura subitus graditur, per iterum & iterum
Agmina, pro a lolis, protrahitque non vix ulior
Ille iuvit; cum prae nova spectant a muliere
Excerpta, sed stirpis calculator in uvis,
Longestamque artem lubigit, Ceras ara recenti
Cremantibus, terraque imperio laqueis vestes.

trampled them under my feet; and repentance was hid from my eyes. But thy enemies were the object of mine indignation. Sin, and death, and hell are the vanquished adversaries. It is their blood, that is sprinkled upon my garments, and that stains all my raiment.—This victory I have gained, by myself alone. Being infinitely too great in my power, to want an associate; and infinitely too jealous of my honor, to accept of my assistance. *Of the people, whether in heaven or on earth, there was none with me; to afford the least succour, or to take the least share in the glorious work.* The salvation of sinners; their deliverance from wrath, and their redemption to GOD; is, in all its parts, my act, even mine, and mine only. Yours be all the benefit; mine all the glory.

The terms of acceptance for fallen man, were a full satisfaction to the *divine justice*, and a *complete conformity* to the divine law. “This, says Mr. Wesley, to *Aspasio*, you “take for granted, but I cannot allow.”—That *Aspasio* does not take these points for granted, I thought, even his enemies would confess. That he has attempted, at least, to make good his opinion, all the world, besides yourself, Sir, will acknowledge. What else is the design of dialogue the third and fourth? What else is aimed at, in dialogue the seventh, eighth, and ninth? The former treat largely of the full satisfaction, given to divine justice. The latter treat still more largely of the conformity, demanded by the divine law, and yielded by the divine JESUS.

These things, however, “you cannot allow.”—Not allow a full satisfaction of divine justice to be necessary! are you not then acceding to the *Sorinian*? Not allow a complete conformity to the divine law to be necessary! are you not then wrapping to the *Antinomian*? See, Sir, how you approach the rocks, both on the right hand, and on the left. May the KEEPER of Israel, preserve yourself and your followers, from suffering shipwreck!—Every one I think, must allow, what you deny; who believes the divine justice to be infinite, and the divine law to be unalterable. A justice, that will admit of any satisfaction, less than complete, can never be deemed infinite. And if the

divine law can rest satisfied, with an obedience that is defective, it is not so venerable, as the law of the *Medes and Persians*.

"*The terms of acceptance for fallen man, you say, are repentance and faith.*"—I must own, I don't much like the expression *terms*, unless it be referred to the mediation of *CHRIST*. And you yourself, if you would act consistently, should not be over-fond of it, because it is not scriptural. Though for my own part, I have no quarrel against the word, because it is not the exact phraseology of scripture, but because I dislike the idea it conveys. Shall we treat with the *DEITY*, as free states or sovereign princes treat with each other? The one obtaining from the other, peace or some advantageous concession, by complying with his terms?

To confirm your opinion, That "*the terms of acceptance for fallen man, are repentance and faith,*" you produce the following text; *Repent ye, and believe the gospel.*—Here you write, like a man of sense; who knows what just disputation means. You lay aside your *certainities*, your *undoubtedlys*, your *unquestionablies*; and urge a proof from scripture.—Whether you rightly understand, and duly apply this proof, must now be enquired.

Repent ye, and believe the gospel. This may be the meaning of the exhortation. *Repent*; relinquish all your wrong notions, relating to the way and manner of finding acceptance with the *DEITY*: *Believe the gospel*; which opens a most unexpected avenue, for the communication of this blessing. Which brings you tidings of a salvation, fully procured by the incarnate *GOD*, and freely offered to the unworthy sinner.

Suppose it to signify a reformation of conduct. The meaning then may be as follows. *Repent*; forsake all your vices, and all your follies; mortify every evil temper, and renounce every evil way. In order to render this practicable, *believe the gospel*. Wherein a *SAVIOUR* is preached and displayed. Who makes peace for such offenders; reconciles them to *GOD*; and obtains eternal redemption for them. This will sweetly withdraw your affections from

is guilty, and see th^e attach them to the blessed GOD.—
 What as, with ut this powerful expedient, you will never
 be deliver'd from the pleasing witchcraft of your lusts. Sin
 will al ways have dominion over you, so long as you are un-
 der the law, and not under grace.—Repentance, thus un-
 derstood, is not the condition of obtaining salvation, but
 the fruit of salvation obtained.

Beides; if repentance be a gift, it cannot be a term of
 communion. He must be a stranger to the import of lan-
 guage, and the common ideas of mankind, who will take
 upon him to affirm the latter; and he must be yet a greater
 stranger to the holy word of GOD, who will offer to
 deny the former.—CHRIST is exalted, saith the apostle, to
 give repentance. Not to require it, as a condition of bles-
 sedness; but to give it, as a most eminent blessing. Not
 require repentance of fallen man, who is not able to
 think a good thought; but give it, from his unsearcha-
 ble riches; and work it, by his almighty power.

You say, The terms of acceptance for fallen man, are,
 " &c."—Me thinks I should be glad to know, what you
 mean by *tullen* man. Do you mean (as you tell^e us, in your
 collection of sermons) "One dead to GOD, and all the
 " things of GOD? Having no power to perform the ac-
 " tions of a living christian, than a dead body to perform
 " the functions of a living man?"—What terms I beseech
 you, can such a one fulfil? Be they ever so difficult, or ever
 so easy, it maketh no difference. The hand, stiff in death,
 is no more able to move a feather, than to remove a moun-
 tain,—Whatever therefore, others may affirm, you, Sir, can-
 not talk of repentance, to be exercised by fallen man; un-
 til he is quickened and enabled by fellowship with CHRIST,
 the living and life-giving head. Unless you choose, either
 to contradict your own assertion, That *tallen* man, is abso-
 lutely dead to all good. Or else think proper to maintain,
 That the dead may not only act, but perform some of the
 most excellent acts, and important offices.

You should likewise, Sir, if you would write correctly
 and argue forcibly, have told us, what you mean by faith.
 Otherwise, you may intend one thing, and I another, even

while we both use the same word. In this case, our dispute might be as endless, as it must be fruitless.

By faith I mean, what St. *John* calls, *A receiving of CHRIST*. A receiving of him and his benefits, as they are freely given, in the word of grace and truth. If this, which is the apostolical, be a proper definition, then it seems not to come under the denomination of a condition. They must be excessive runners, indeed, who would call my receiving a rich present, the terms or conditions of possessing it. Or would esteem my coming, at a plentiful feast, the terms and conditions of enjoying it. Is not this to subtilize, and sound sense is lost?

Faith, according to St. *Paul*, is a persuasion, that CHRIST loved me, and gave himself for me. Where is any trace or any hint of conditionality, in this description? I don't hear the apostle saying, he loved me, *provided I repent* — He gave himself for me, in case I think thus, or do that. But he gave himself for me, when I was *ungodly*, and *had* performed no conditions, when I was *without strength*, and *could* perform no conditions. — Thus he gave himself for me, that I might have remission of sins, through his blood, and eternal life, through his righteousness. — Believing these delightful truths, and receiving the heavenly privileges, I love my most adorable benefactor, and abhor those iniquities, for which he wept, and groaned, as I died. — That love of CHRIST, is vital holiness; and this abhorrence of sin, is practical repentance. And both are the fruits, therefore cannot be the conditions, of salvation by JESUS.

Some holy men and excellent writers, I confess, have not scrupled to call faith and repentance the conditions of our salvation. Yet I cannot prevail on myself to admire or approve the language. I fear, it tends to envenom the sincere soul; to darken the lustre of grace; and to admit too much occasion for boasting.

To embarrass the sincere soul — I do, if I am forced on conditions, this will naturally divert my attention from the grand and all-sufficient cause of justification — the blood

ness of CHRIST, which alone gives solid comfort. Instead of delighting myself in the LORD REDEEMER, I shall be engaged in an anxious concern about the supposed conditions. Whether I have performed them? Whether I have performed them aright? Whether there may be some latent defect, that spoils all, and renders my labour fruitless? The more serious our minds are, and the more tender our consciences, the more shall we liable to perplexity and disquietude on this head.

It eclipses the luster of grace—Ye are saved by grace, says the oracle of heaven. But if salvation be upon conditions, it cannot be of grace. It must, in some measure at least, be of works. Since it depends upon working the conditions; it is obtained by working the conditions; and the candidate has reason to look principally unto his performance of the conditions. Even GOD's everlasting love, and CHRIST's everlasting righteousness, are, till the conditions are fulfilled, but cyphers without the initial figure.

It affords too much occasion for boasting.—May I not, in this case, thank my own application and industry? Because my performance of the condition is meritorious of the covenanted reward. So far meritorious, that the reward is my due.—And it will be an act of apparent injustice to withhold it.—But shall these things be said unto the ALMIGHTY? Do these things hide vanity from man; or consist with a salvation, that is without money, or without price? Not quite so well, I believe, yourself will acknowledge, as the following lines.

Let the world their virtue boast,
 Their works of righteousness;
 Let virtue under them and lost,
 As freely lav'd by grace.
 O let me I disclaim,
 Till, only *this* shall my plea,
 My chief of merits am,
 Be JESUS dear to me.

“Falsely, then, you say, is justified, not by perfect obedience, but by faith.” “Not by perfect obedience.” Ah,

Sir! If you had remembered the immutability of GOD, and the spirituality of his law, you would not have challenged this expression.—“ But by faith ” Here, 'tis true, you use the language of scripture. Faith, you allow, is imputed to us for righteousness; therefore (you infer) not the righteousness or perfect obedience of CHRIST. This, it you mean any thing, or would I speak any thing to the purpose, must be your way of arguing. CHRIST's righteousness is that blessed, glorious, heavenly expedient, which, received by faith, justifies, sanctifies, saves.

According to your gospel, faith will save to the righteousness of the REDEEMER; “ Depart hence. I have no need of thee. I myself act as the justifying righteousness. I stand in the stead of perfect obedience, in order to acceptance with GOD ”—To this may we not reply? Was faith then crucified for you? Or is it by means of faith, that not one jot or tittle of its precepts pass unfulfilled?

If faith, in this sense, is imputed for righteousness, how can you subscribe that emphatical article, which declares; “ We are accounted righteous before GOD, only for the merits of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST ” Surely Sir, you are accounted righteous, for the sake of that whatever it be, which stands in the stead of perfect obedience. That whatever it be, may claim the honor; and to that justice itself cannot but award the prize.

If your notion be true, the believer ought to have his own faith principally in view. To this, therefore, so long as I know my own interest, I must chiefly look. Whereas, look unto JESUS, is the direction of the HOLY GHOST. Look unto his perfect atonement, and complete righteousness, and be saved; is the grand unchangeable edict, issued from the throne of grace.

“ What CHRIST has done.”—Here Mr. Wesley himself speaks of what CHRIST has done. He represents it by a very magnificent image. He lays it as the foundation of

* These are Mr. Wesley's own words, in his explanation of 1 Cor. 13. 12. See his Sermons on the Righteousness of Faith. Vol. I. p. 111.

that first and most comprehensive blessing, justification. In this I most cordially agree with him—hoping, that we shall unanimously join, to defend this important sentiment, against all opposition, and endeavour to display the REDEEMER's works, as well as his passion, in all its glorious excellency.

“What CHRIST has done is the foundation of our justification—not the term or condition.”—The Prophet Isaiah had other notions of this matter; *If thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed. If* * is the hypothetic language; denotes a term; expresses a condition; on the performance of which, the MESSIAH should see his seed. The grand term, on which all these blessings depend, and by which they are made sure to believers, is the pouring out of the MESSIAH's soul, as a sacrifice for their sins, and a ransom for their persons.

“The foundation, not the condition”—Methinks, you should offer some reason for this distinction. Especially since CHRIST himself declares; *I am*, in that grandest of all affairs, the redemption of sinners, *the beginning and the ending*.

I have heard it insinuated, that Mr. Wesley is a Jesuit in disguise. This insinuation I rejected, as the grossest calumny; I abhorred, as falsehood itself. I acquit you, Sir, from the charge of being a Jesuit or a Papist. But no body, I apprehend, can acquit your principles, from halting between protestantism and popery. They have stolen the unhallowed fire, and are infected with the leaven of Antichrist. You have unhappily adopted some specious Papistical tenets, and listening to the mother of abominations, more than you are aware.

Amidst all your mistakes (and from mistakes who is exempt) I verily believe, your principal aim is, the honor of CHRIST, and the edification of souls. You have publicly declared, that “wherein soever he is mistaken, his mind is open to conviction; and he sincerely desires to be better informed.” This is written in the true spirit of a

christian. To this spirit I address myself. Begging of you, Sir, with the sincerity and tenderness of a brother, to consider these hints impartially. Lest, being misled yourself, you mislead your thousands and ten thousands.

In the mean time, I hope, you will not take it amiss, if, to my affectionate entreaties, I add my earnest prayers.— That you, Sir, and your people, may be in the number of those *blessed men, unto whom GOD imputeth righteousness without works*. Which I take to be the first and great evangelical privilege; as I am very sure, it is the richest benefit, I know how to crave, either for you, or for your most, &c.





LETTER VII.

REV. SIR,

PERSONS skilled in the dissection of animal bodies, frequently mention *comparative anatomy*. May I borrow the term, and apply it to theology ! I do then freely declare, that in case you censured *Aspasio*, for points of divinity, *comparatively small*, you should have no opposition nor any check from this pen.

Some people for instance, are of opinion, that the belief of a parent is considerably beneficial to his children. That, when St. Paul says to the anxious Jailor ; believe on the LORD JESUS, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house ; he promises some special good, that should redound to the man's household, from his own receipt of CHRIST. It seems, indeed, that the apostle must intend something of this nature ; more than barely to say, thy family also, provided they follow thy example, shall obtain salvation with eternal glory. If this were the whole of his meaning, he need not have confined it to the Jailor's domesticks, but might have extended it to all the inhabitants of Philippi.

Such tenets, whether admitted or rejected, affect not the main point. Men may embrace which side of the questi

on they think proper, and yet be sound in the faith of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. But errors, relating to that righteousness, which is the one efficient cause of justification; in which alone GOD is well pleased, and all his perfections glorified; which is the only spring of solid peace, and true godliness; such errors are extremely pernicious. These we must withstand with resolution and zeal. We may not give place to their encroachment, no, not for an hour. The former may be compared to a fly, settled on the dish; the latter are more like poison, mixed with our food. To dislodge that, may not be amiss. But to prevent, or expel, or antidote this is absolutely necessary. In the former number, perhaps, the reader will rank your observation, which follows. But as I have undertaken to follow you step by step, I must not disregard it.

Aspasio, speaking of David, expresses a high esteem for that hero, king, and saint. Allowing, that his esteem were carried a little too far; where would have been the great hurt, or the grievous offence? How, Sir, could this have led to "unsettled notions in religion" *? — I was inclined to answer your reflections, as the hero himself answered his censorious brother, 'Is there not a cause?' Then passed on to another subject, as he, perfectly master of himself, and nobly superior to the affront, turned to another person. But as you seem to have injured David, and not done justice to the truth, I shall hardly be excused, if I dismiss the matter, without some more particular notice.

GOD himself dignifies David with the most exalted of all characters, says Aspasio.—"Far, very far from it; says "Mr. Wesley, we have more exalted characters than David's"—Where, Sir? Shew me in any of the Saints, or in any of the sacred writers, a more devout, or a more divine spirit, than that which breathes in the pen-man of the Psalms. For my own part, I know nothing superior to it, in any author, or in any language. Neither can I conceive a more exalted character, than the character given of Da-

* The reader will please to remember, that the Pamphlet, which contains the Remarks, under consideration is entitled, "A preervative against unsettled notions in Religion."

vid, a man after GOD's own heart. If GOD be an unerring judge, if his approbation be the intallible standard, th's description must express the most consummate human worth. Say whatever you will of a person, it does not, it cannot, exceed this most illustrious testimony.

"But th's is said of David in a particular respect." — Ay! notwithstanding the HOLY SPIRIT has declared concerning him; a man after mine own heart, who shall perform all my will. If you was examining this text, would you think it right to say? He shall perform all my will, that is, he shall serve me in some particular respect — "It was not said, with regard to his whole character." — No! not when the SPIRIT of inspiration has borne this witness to David; his heart was perfect with the LORD his GOD. Could his heart be perfect, yet not influence his whole conduct? — "But it was said in the second or third year of Saul's reign." Therefore it was not applicable to him, during the future years of his life. This is the inference you would draw. But can you really think it a just one? Or would you call that person, a man after GOD's own heart; who is singularly pious in the days of his youth, but swerves and declines in his advanced age?

Notwithstanding all these remonstrances, you push matters to the utmost. As though it was a point of the last importance, to prove David an errant backslider. With this view, you add; "But was he a man after GOD's own heart, all his life, or in all particulars? So far from it, that" — stop, Sir, I beseech you. And, before you speak unadvisedly with your lips, hear what the LORD himself replies, to both your interrogatories. David did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him, all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. Surely, you was not aware, that such things are written in the book of GOD. Otherwise, you would not have contradicted them, with so much boldness. I will, therefore, put the most charitable construction upon your proceeding, and say

with the apostle ; I wot, that through inadvertence you did it.

There is not a just man upon earth, that sinneth not, is a text quoted by Aspasio. Upon which Mr. Wesley observes ; " Solomon might truly say so, before CHRIST came."—According to this insinuation, what Solomon said in his proverbs and other books, was said only by a short-sighted mortal. Who might adapt his instructions to the present economy ; but was not able to plan a system of morals for futurity. Whereas, I always supposed, that his writings were dictated by that infinitely wise SPIRIT, before whom all times are present, and to whom all events are known.—Agreeably to this supposition, St. Paul informs us ; that whatsoever things were written afore-time, whether by Solomon or any other prophet, were written for our learning. No ; suggests Mr. Wesley. Here is something written, which appertains not to us christians. We are above it.—Are you so ? Your reason for these lofty apprehensions ? Why, " St. John affirms, whosoever is born of GOD, sinneth not."

True ; he sinneth not habitually. It is not his customary practice. Thus the passage is explained by another apostle ; sin, though it may make insurrection, does not reign in his mortal body. Though it may assault him, yet it has not dominion over him.—

Again ; he sinneth not, is the same way of speaking, and to be understood with the same limitation, as that text in Job, HE giveth not account of any of his matters. How, Sir, would you interpret these words ? It is undeniably certain, that sometimes GOD giveth account of his matters.—He gave it to Abraham, when Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, were to be destroyed with Brimstone and fire from heaven. You would therefore, I presume, in some such qualified sense expound the passage ; " He giveth not account ; it is not his usual way. Not a customary procedure with the supreme disposer of things. He generally requireth his creatures to transact with him upon trust. To give themselves up, with an implicit resignation, to the veracity of his word, and the good-

"pleasure of his will."—The harmony of scripture, and the necessity of the case, call upon you to give the same exposition of the text before us.

I said, the necessity of the case. For, you will please to observe; the thing affirmed, is affirmed in such a manner, that it must be applied to every individual christian, and at the very instant of his commencing a true christian. The apostle says not, a saint of the first rank, but whosoever.—He says not, after such a one has been, for a considerable time, born of GOD; but whosoever is born, is but just entered upon the desirable state, sinneth not. The character belongs to the very weakest believer. The description is suited even to babes in CHRIST. To suppose, therefore, that it implies an entire freedom from sin, infirmity, and defect; is to suppose, that all the children of the regeneration, are born in a state of manhood; or rather, are more than men, even while they are infants of a day.

Our sense of the passage is free from this propriety, yet gives no countenance to immorality. *Whosoever is born of GOD sinneth not.* He does not, he cannot sin, like the devil, or one actuated by the diabolical nature. This interpretation is rendered probable, by the Apostle's antithesis; *he that committeth sin is of the devil.* It is rendered necessary, by the preceding remark, and by the experience of christians. The text thus interpreted, is applicable to the babe in CHRIST, as well as to the adult. Though either of them may fall, through the violence or surprise of temptation, yet neither of them can live and die in allowed iniquity, whether of omission or commission. They cannot have a settled love to any known sin, nor can they commit it with the full consent of their will.

Solomon, when he uttered those humbling words*, had his eye upon what you somewhere call, "the inconceivable purity and spirituality of the sacred precepts." Upon that universal obedience which they require, in every the minutest instance.—That we do nothing, great or small,

* Eccl. vii. 29.

which they forbid. Leave nothing undone, in heart or life, which they enjoin.—That we do all this, in the most perfect degree. Not only serving the LORD, but serving him with all our strength. Not only loving our neighbour, but loving him as our own soul. Ever exercising the utmost regularity of affection and desire; ever maintaining the utmost rectitude of temper and thought. If you also, Sir, had your eye fixed upon the same law, as it delineates and demands this “inconceivable purity and spirituality;” you would not scruple to acquiesce in the wise man’s confession, nor think much to adopt it as our own. You would acknowledge it calculated, not only for the Mosaic era, and meridian of Judea, but for all times and places; till those new heavens, and that new earth appear, wherein dwelleth consummate righteousness.

In many things we offend all. “That St. James does not speak this of himself, or real christians, will clearly appear to all, who impartially consider the context.”—I wish Sir, you had made this appear to one; even to him, whom you honor with this address. Then I should not have been obliged to ask; Of whom speaketh the Apostle?—He says, my brethren. Does this truly imply true believers, and real christians?—He says, we teachers.—Does not this comprehend himself, and describe his office? He adds, we all. If he himself, and real christians, are not included in this most comprehensive clause; I would desire to know, in what terms they could possibly be comprised.

According to this interpretation, the arguing is just, and the conclusion forcible. As though he had said,—“My dear brethren; though you are truly converted to christianity, yet do not unadvisedly engage in the arduous and awful work of the ministry. Remembering, that we ministers of the gospel, shall be subject to a stricter judgement, than christians in an ordinary life; and if, upon trial, we are found faithless, shall receive a heavier condemnation.—The danger, let me add, is very considerable. Because, such is the frailty of our mortal state, that the very best among us, and those conversant in sa-

“cred things, cannot always walk uprightly ; but, in many instances, we trip, we stumble, we offend.”

Whereas, if neither the Apostle himself, nor real christians, be meant ; I can see no propriety, nor force in the reasoning. Nay ; I can see no reason at all ; though the illative particle *for* evidently requires it. Nothing but a most insipid and frivolous assertion. “For, in many things, we that are not real christians, offend.” Is this a discovery, worthy of apostolical wisdom ? Is this all, that the inspired St. James meant to declare ? You and I could have told him and his people a great deal more. Whosoever is not a real christian offends, not in many things only, but in every thing. To such a one nothing is pure. His mind and conscience are defiled. His whole life is sin.

We have examined this objection, as it stands in itself. Let us now take a view of it, as it may appear in its consequences.—*In many things we offend all.* “The Apostle speaks not of himself, nor of real christians,” What fine work would not adversaries make with the Scriptures, if we should allow them Mr. Wesley’s liberty of interpretation ! Tell a *Pelagian*, that all mankind is depraved. Prove the universal depravity, by that abasing text *all we, like sheep, have gone astray.* How easily may he reply ; all we, does not mean all mankind. The Prophet speaks not of himself, nor of virtuous persons. But only of prophane people, and men of the baser sort.—Tell an *Arian*, that our LORD JESUS CHRIST is very GOD : Confirm the glorious truth, by that most cogent text ; *In him dwelleth all the fulness of the GODHEAD.* The heretic has nothing more to do, than, in Mr. Wesley’s manner, to answer, all fulness does not mean all the divine perfections, but only some pittance or portion of them.—Dear Sir, whenever you are disposed to criticise again, let me beseech you to consider a little, the import of language, and the consequences of things.

Had the words been, *In many things we offend*, you might by disregarding the context, have borrowed some slight seeming countenance for your criticism, from verse the 9th. Where the Apostle is supposed to personate the wicked,

therewith curse we man. But in the place under consideration, he enlarges the sentiment, and strengthens the language. Though free from that particular crime, he was not free from this general charge. Here therefore he spares not himself. He takes shame to himself. And teaches the most upright of the human race, to plead guilty before their judge. We the servants of GOD ; we the ambassadors of CHRIST ; we all *—not one excepted—in many things offend.—Where then could they, and O! where can you and I, look for our perfection ; but only in our divinely gracious SURETY, BRIDE-GROOM, HEAD ? There let us seek it, where ^{some} excellent lines (whose author you may probably know) have taught us to find it.

Now let me climb perfection's height,
And into nothing fall ;
Be less than nothing in thy sight,
While CHRIST is all in all.

In the paragraph which begins, " O children of Adam," you don't distinguish what the law is made to speak, according to a new scheme of divinity ; and what it really does speak to true believers, on the principles of the gospel.—Give me leave, to rectify your mistakes ; and to point out the manner, in which you should have expressed yourself.

To rectify your mistakes—you suppose the law, upon Aspasio's plan, speaking to this effect. " O children of Adam, you are no longer obliged to love the LORD your GOD with all your heart." Indeed you are. The obligation remains, and is unalterable. But it has been fully satisfied, as the condition of life and immortality, by the believer's glorious SURETY.—" Once I insisted on "absolute purity of heart. Now I can dispense with some "degrees of evil desire." No such thing. Every degree of evil desire I condemn with inexorable rigour. But every such offence has been thus condemned, and thus punish-

* Ne seipfos quidem excipiunt Apostoli. BENEDICTUS, in loc.

ed, in the flesh of your crucified LORD.—“Since CHRIST
 “ has fulfilled the law for you, you need not fulfil it.” Rather, you need not fulfil it, in order to the justification of your persons, or to obtain eternal life and glory. This, to you the greatest of impossibilities, has been performed in your behalf, by a MEDIATOR and a REDEEMER, to whom nothing is impossible —“ I will connive at, yea, accommodate my demands to your weakness.” Not this, but what is much better. I see no sinful weaknesses in you. Because, they are all covered * with the resplendent robe of your SAVIOUR’s righteousness. Therefore, I no longer curse, but bless you, and sign your title to everlasting happiness.—Thus the enmity of our nature is slain. Thus the precepts, even the strictest precepts, become amiable and desirable. We love the law, which, through our dear REDEEMER, is no longer against us, but on our side. Is a messenger of peace, and bears witness to our completeness in CHRIST.

The manner, in which you should have expressed yourself—This is what the law speaks, according to Aspasio’s doctrine. “ O believers in CHRIST, I am, like my divine
 “ author, consummate and unchangeable. I did require,
 “ I did require, and ever shall require, perfect love to God;
 “ perfect charity to your neighbour; and perfect holiness,
 “ both in heart and life. Never abating one tittle of these
 “ my requirements, I shall denounce the curse upon every
 “ disobedience; upon the least departure from absolute
 “ perfection.—But this is your comfort, believers; that the
 “ curse is executed upon your most holy SURETY. This
 “ is your comfort, believers; that my precepts have been
 “ fully obeyed by JESUS your SAVIOUR. As this was
 “ done, in your nature, and in your stead, I am satisfied,
 “ and you are justified. Now, though I can never dispense
 “ with any fault, nor connive at any infirmity; yet I be-
 “ hold all your faults laid upon IMMANUEL. I behold

* Psal. xxxiv. 1.

"all his righteousness put upon you. And on his account I acquit you; I accept you: and pronounce you righteous*."

This is the language of the law to the faithful, as they are in CHRIST JESUS. This is the spirit of Aspasio's conversation with his friend Theron. The native tendency of his doctrine, and its powerful agency in producing true holiness, are professedly displayed in the tenth letter, and not obscurely hinted, in various other places. If you can prove, that it has a contrary tendency; you will prove, that the grace of GOD does no longer teach us to deny, but prompt us to commit ungodliness. An attempt, in which, with all my esteem for your person, and difference to your abilities, I cannot wish you GOD speed.

"Does the righteousness of GOD ever mean (is you affirm) the merits of CHRIST?"—Where do I affirm this, Sir? Be pleased to produce the passage. At least refer us to the page.—Aspasio, in the place which offends you, speaks of what CHRIST has done and suffered; of his active and passive obedience. These expressions you change into "the merits of CHRIST." Which being an ambiguous phrase, may serve to perplex the cause, rather than clear up the difficulty. Give me leave, therefore, to restore Aspasio's words, and to state the question fairly.

"Does the righteousness of GOD ever signify the active and passive obedience of CHRIST?"—To this Mr. Wesley replies, "I believe not once in all the scripture."—Why then, Sir, do you not disprove, what Aspasio has advanced, in support of this interpretation? You believe one thing: he believes another. And there is this little difference, in the ground you respectively go upon. He appeals

* I think, it is no misrepresentation, to suppose the law speaking, in this manner, to the believer.—Because, to them all things are become new. Consequently, the voice of the law is new. Because, all things are theirs. It is, the sentence of the law is theirs. Not to overwhelm them with confusion, but to make them joyful through hope.—Because, this is the language of the almighty LAW GIVER, to the redeemed of the LORD JESUS; and surely the law will not jar, but harmonize with its author, saying, "How shall I curse when GOD hath not cursed? Or how shall I defy, whom the LORD hath not defied?"

to argument, and scripture. You rest the whole matter upon this single bottom, "I believe so."

You proceed—"It (that is the righteousness of GOD) often means, and particularly in the epistle to the *Romans*, GOD's method of justifying sinners."—Suppose, I should say, in my turn: it is phrase never means, no, not in the epistle to the *Romans*, GOD's method of justifying sinners. I should then argue in your own way. Bring a shield, suited to your sword. Just as good an argument to defend, as you have brought to destroy my opinion. What would the judicious reader say, on such an occasion? Would he not smile, and cry; "A goodly pair of disputants truly!"

But let me ask; does the holiness of GOD signify his method of sanctifying sinners? Does the wisdom of GOD signify his method of making sinners wise? This no mortal has suspected. This you yourself will hardly venture to assert. Why then should we take your word, when, without assigning the least reason, you dictate and declare "The righteousness of GOD means his method of justifying sinners?"—You must pardon us, Sir, if we prefer St. *Peter's* judgment. His judgment, in that memorable passage: *who have obtained like precious faith in the righteousness of our GOD, even of our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST*. This sentence is a key to all those texts in the new testament, and many of those in the old, which mention the righteousness of GOD. Here, it necessarily signifies the righteousness of CHRIST; because none else is our GOD and SAVIOUR. Here, it confessedly signifies the object of justifying faith. Which cannot be the essential righteousness of an absolute GOD, but must be the vicarious righteousness of an incarnate GOD. And why should you scruple to call the righteousness of CHRIST, the righteousness of GOD? Since his blood is called, the blood of GOD. His life, which he laid down for us, is called the life of GOD. And he himself, as the author of our salvation, is called JEHOVAH (or GOD self-existent and everlasting) *our righteousness*.

It is possible, you may produce some commentators of eminence, who coincide or have led the way, in this your interpretation. But may we not ask them, as well as yourself, on what authority they proceed?—Is this the plain and natural signification of the words? No, but an apparent force upon their natural import.—Does this tend to fix and ascertain the sense of the passage? No; but it gives the passage such a rambling turn, as will accommodate itself to the sentiments of Arians or Socinians, Arminians or Papists. Is this reconcileable with the tenure of scripture? *He hath made HIM to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* Make a trial of your interpretation upon this distinguished text. See, how it will accord with common sense, or the analogy of faith. That we might be made the righteousness of GOD; that is, “That we might be made GOD’s method of justifying sinners.” Can you yourself, Sir, upon an impartial review, be pleased with such interpretations of sacred writ?

How much more noble, and how much more comfortable, is the easy and obvious sense; which the words, in a most beautiful climax, afford! he made CHRIST, who was perfectly free from sin, both in heart and life; GOD made him to be sin, justly chargeable with it, and justly punishable for it. That we, who are full of sin, both original and actual, might be made righteous—and not barely righteous, but (which is a much stronger expression) *righteousness itself*—yea, that we might be made, what exceeds all parallel, and passes all understanding, *the righteousness of GOD* *. Might have that very righteousness for our justification, which the GOD of all perfection, uniting himself to our nature, wrought, finished, and infinitely enabled.

Mr Samuel Clarke, in his annotations on this verse, on Rom. i. 16. on Rom. x. 3. writes in the same vague and unsatisfactory manner as yourself. I could mention another

* St. Chrysostom expounds the important passage, in much the same manner. His words are worthy, not only to be copied in a note, but to be written on our heart.

celebrated commentator, who leans to this timid and trimming scheme.—I speak thus freely, because I look upon the article of justification through the righteousness of our GOD and SAVIOUR, to be the supreme distinguishing glory of christianity. Because, I consider it as the richest, privilege of the christian. To have a righteousness—a consummate righteousness—the very righteousness of the incarnate GOD—dignified with all the perfections of the divine nature—to have this righteousness imputed for our justification ! matchless, inconceivable blessing ! this fills the believer's heart, with inexpressible comfort and joy. This displays the grace of GOD, in the most charming and transporting light. This constitutes the most engaging motive to love, to holiness, and to all willing obedience.

Let us not then treat of it, in such *diluting* terms, or in such a *promising* strain, as shall defeat the efficacy of the heavenly cordial, or deliver up the precious *depositum* to the enemies of the gospel. Let us rather, by a clear and full *manifestation of the truth*, of this capital and leading truth especially, *commend ourselves to every man's conscience*.—Their humour may dislike it, their prejudice may reject it ; but their conscience, whenever it awakes and gains the ascendant, will embrace it ; will cleave to it ; and rejoice in it.

But stay. Let me proceed cautiously. Not triumph immaturely. You rally your forces, and prepare for a fresh attack. *Aspasio* tells his friend ; that the righteousness of GOD, signifies a righteousness of the most super eminent dignity. Such as is worthy to be called by his name, and may justly challenge his acceptance. To this you reply, “ I cannot allow it at all.”—*Aspasio* supports his opinion by scripture, by reason, and by a very respectable authority. All which Mr. Wesley would confront and overthrow, by that one irrefragable proof, “ I cannot allow it at all.”—Surely said I every reader is treated not as one, that is to be addressed with argument, and convinced by reasoning, but as a tame disciple, that is to acquiesce in the great preceptor's solemn “ SAY SO.”

To your next paragraph I have no material objection. I shall only observe, that you would discard the expression,

imputation of righteousness, and insert in its stead, *interest in CHRIST*. You had not always, Sir, such an aversion to phrase imputed. Witness that stanza in one of your hymns ;

Let faith and love combine
To guard your valiant breast,
The plate be righteousness divine,
Imputed and imprest.

However in this place I am willing to gratify you. Because, it will be difficult to shew, how a sinner can have a real interest in CHRIST, any other way, than by imputation. Look upon the holiness of his nature, and the atonement of his death, as the one undivided ineffable treasure, in which every believing sinner is interested. And, at the last, introducing him, with dignity and triumph, into everlasting habitations.

Here I lay down my pen ; unless you will permit me to relate a little piece of history, not foreign to your last sentiment.—A certain General, happened to observe a common soldier distinguishing himself, on the day of battle, with uncommon activity and courage. Determined to reward merit, he advanced the brave plebian to a Captain's post. Who had not long enjoyed the honor, before he came to his benefactor, and, with a dejected countenance, begged leave to resign his commission. The General, surprized at such an unexpected request, asked him the reason. Your Officers, said the petitioner, being gentlemen of family and education, think it beneath them to associate with a rustic. So that, now, I am abandoned on every side ; and am less happy, since my preferment, than before this instance of your Highness's favour.—Is this the cause of your uneasiness ? replied the General. Then it shall be redressed. One day when he was reviewing his army, he calls the young hero from the ranks ; leans his hand upon his shoulder, and walks with him through all the lines. After such a signal token of his Prince's regard, the Officers courted, rather than shunned, his company.

And will not the favor of the blessed JESUS, give us as great a distinction, in the heavenly world ? wearing the

most illustrious tokens of his love, that he himself could possibly give ?—In these tokens of his love may we and our readers be found ! Then shall we meet one another with courage and comfort, at the great tribunal ; with honor and joy, amidst the angels of light ; with everlasting exultation and rapture, around the throne of the LAMB.

Under such pleasing hope, I take my leave at present, and remain your, &c.





LETTER VIII.

REV. SIR,

YOU introduce the paragraph, that comes next under our consideration, by a very just distinction. *Aspasio* had observed, that a rebel may be forgiven, without being restored to the dignity of a son. To which you reply ; “ A rebel against an earthly king may ; but not a rebel “ against GOD. In the very same moment that GOD “ forgives, we are the sons of GOD.”—This is perfectly right. But hence to infer, that the conversation of our two friends is no better than “ a idle dispute,” is not very polite, and not at all conclusive. Because, remission of the offence, and restoration to favour, may come, in the same moment, and yet be different blessings. That afflicted patient, mentioned in the gospel, had, at the same instant, his ears opened and the string of his tongue loosed. Were these effects, therefore, one and the same kind of healing ? Besides ; why are forgiveness and sonship united in the divine donation ? Because, the sufferings of a sinner, and the obedience of a son, were united in the divine RE-DEEMER. So that we must still have our eye, our believing and adoring eye, upon the meritorious righteousness of our LORD.

"Pardon and acceptance, though, &c." Here I see nothing but the *crambe recet-ta*.—"The words of Job, &c." Here I see nothing but the usual argument, our master's *ipse dixit*. Therefore we will pass on to the next period.

Two texts of scripture are produced. You set aside Aspasio's interpretation, to make way for one of your own. Which might have passed without suspicion, if it had appeared in your sermons, or been delivered from your pulpit. Where a person may be content with the general sense, without entering upon a critical nicety. But, by rejecting Aspasio's exposition, you seem to intend a peculiar degree of accuracy. Let us then examine the passages, with such a view.—"Grace reigneth through righteousness unto eternal life;" "that is, the free love of GOD brings us, through justification and sanctification, to glory."

In this, I question, Sir, whether you are exactly orthodox. You lead the reader to suppose, that sanctification is as much the cause of glory as justification. That CHRIST's work, and our graces, have just the same weight; act in the very same capacity; have, at least, a joint influence, in procuring eternal life.—You should rather have expressed yourself in some such manner; "The free grace of GOD brings us, through the joyful privilege of justification, first to sanctification, or the love of his blessed self; then to glory; or the enjoyment of his blessed self."

Besides; you neglect the significance of that beautiful and emphatical word, reigneth. On this much stress ought to be laid in reading the sentence; therefore, it ought not to be totally overlooked in explaining the sentence. Grace is discovered in other instances. Grace is exercised in other blessings. But by giving us eternal life; by giving it freely, even when we are undeserving guilty creatures; this ever amiable attribute reigneth. It is manifested with every grand and charming recommendation. It appears, like the illustrious Solomon, when seated on his inimitably splendid throne of ivory and gold: or like the magnificent Ahasuerus, when he shewed the riches of his glorious kingdom, and the honor of his excellent majesty.

Another particular I cannot persuade myself to admit. You change the word righteousness into justification. Instead of saying, "Brings us through righteousness;" you say, "Bring us through justification." By this language, you scarce distinguish yourself from any heretic. You may rank with the Arian, or with the Sectari of any denomination. They will, every one, allow the necessity of justification, in order to final felicity. But not the necessity of a righteousness adequate to the demands of the law; as a foundation for this blessed hope.—You do just the same injury to CHRIST and his righteousness, which obtain this in conceivable recompence of reward; as you would receive from a messenger, who carries a rich present to your friend, but will not acknowledge from whom it comes. It comes, he confesses, from some man; but obstinately refuses to say from Mr. John Wesley. Whereas, Aspasio scruples not to own, nay, rejoices to declare, from whence the invaluable benefit of justification proceeds. Not from works of the law; no, nor from works of the SPIRIT; from nothing done by us, from nothing wrought in us; but wholly from the blood and obedience of JESUS CHRIST.

The next passage, on which you descant, is: "That they may receive forgiveness, and a lot among the sanctified." Thus, you translate the original. Aspasio, not affecting needless novelty, is content with the common version. "That they may receive forgiveness of sins; and inheritance among all them that are sanctified by faith that is in ME."—Why do you omit the word sins? Forgiveness, I own, implies it. But the apostle chuses to express it. By which means, the sentence becomes more full and emphatical. Grace is more highly honored and more deeply abased. I wonder also, why you should prefer lot to inheritance, which is the usual translation. The latter word conveys a much more noble and pleasing idea to the English reader, than the former. *Receive forgiveness of sins*: nor earn it (let us mark this) by performing good works, but receive it, as an absolute gift. Just as *Joseph's*

brethren received the portions from the Viceroy of Egypt's table. — *Receive an inheritance*; consisting of all spiritual blessings here, and a title to everlasting blessedness hereafter. All which are bestowed as freely, as the several portions of land in Canaan were, by Moses and Joshua consigned over to the tribes of Israel for a possession. *Among those that are sanctified.* If you should enquire, how sinners are sanctified? The answer is added; *By faith which is in ME.* Not for faith, as your conditional scheme supposes; but by faith. By accepting the blessings mentioned; by looking upon them as our own; through the divine gift; and by living in the delightful enjoyment of them. Thus our hearts are won to GOD, and filled with his love. Thus they are weaned from vanity, and renewed in true holiness.

Is the satisfaction made by CHRIST's death, sufficient to obtain both our full pardon, and our final happiness? Aspasio has answered this question in the negative. He has confirmed his opinion by the authority of Scripture, and the testimony of reason. Mr. Wesley thinks it enough to reply; "Unquestionably it is sufficient, and neither of the texts you cite prove the contrary."—How easy, by this way of arguing, to overthrow any system, and silence demonstration itself!—But pray, Sir, be pleased to recollect yourself. Did you not, a little while ago, extol Aspasio as "unquestionably right." Because he made the *universal* obedience of CHRIST, from his birth to his death, the one foundation of his hope? Yet here you condemn him, as "unquestionably wrong," because he does not attribute all to CHRIST's death exclusively. Will Mr. Wesley never have done with self contradiction? Why will he give me such repeated cause to complain?—*Quo teneam vultus, &c.*

If it was requisite for CHRIST to be baptised, argues Aspasio, much more to fulfil the moral law.—"I cannot prove, replies Mr. Wesley, that either the one or the other was requisite, in order to his purchasing redemption for us." Why then do you admit his obedience to the moral law, as an essential part of the foundation of your

hope? A tottering foundation methinks, which is laid in a doctrine you cannot prove.

But if you cannot prove it, may not others prove it for you? You are not called to prove this point, Sir, but only to disprove, what Aspasio has advanced, in confirmation of it.—That it was requisite for our LORD to be baptized, he himself acknowledges. Speaking of that sacred rite, he says, *Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.* It becometh; was it not requisite for CHRIST, always to act the becoming part? In every circumstance to demean himself, according to the utmost decorum and highest dignity of character? “This was not requisite to purchase redemption for us.” For what then was it requisite? Not to wash away any stain from the holy JESUS. Not to obtain any blessedness for the SON of the HIGHEST. Since, as the SON of the eternal GOD, he had an undoubted right to all the blessings of heaven and earth, of time and eternity.

“But it was not requisite, that he should fulfil the moral law.”—No! Do you then establish the law? Are you not the Antinomian, who would have sinful man saved, yet the divine law not fulfilled, either by them or their SURETY? This is a strange way of magnifying the great standard of all righteousness. Rather, it is the sure way of dishonoring and debasing it.—What says our LORD? *I came, not to destroy the law, but to fulfil* *. Did this signify, as some expository refiners suggest, only to vindicate and illustrate, the law; to explain its highest meaning, and rescue it from the false glosses of the Scribes; the business might have been done by the Prophets and Apostles. No occasion for the KING of heaven to appear in person. His ambassadors might have transacted the whole affair of vindication and explanation. But to fulfil every jot and tittle prescribed in its commands; to suffer all the vengeance and the whole curse, denounced in its penalty; this was a work worthy of the SON of GOD—practicable by none,

but the SON of GOD—and, being executed by HIM, is truly meritorious of pardon and life for poor sinners; of their restoration to the divine favor, and of their admission into the heavenly kingdom.

The moral law is inviolable in its nature, and of eternal obligation. This is a truth of great importance. What this is connected, and on this depends, the absolute necessity of a vicarious righteousness. I am no longer surprised, that you dispute against the latter, since you question or deny the former—But consider, what our LORD says farther upon this subject, in the fifth of St. Matthew, and the eighteenth verse. Perhaps, you will reply; “I have both considered it, and expounded it, in my sermons.” You have. But in such a manner, as I hope, you will live to retract. Thus you expound the awful text, and turn it into a piece of unmeaning tautology. “One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass, till heaven and earth pass; or as it is expressed immediately after, till all (or rather all things) be fulfilled, till the consummation of all things†.” Thus stands the passage, interpreted according to your criticism. “Till the consummation of all things, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till the consummation of all things.” See! to what miserable subterfuges a man of learning is driven, in order to evade the force of a text, which militates strongly for the meritorious obedience of CHRIST.

How much more just, more noble, more useful, is the common exposition, and the obvious meaning? Which we may thus introduce—These are the terms of life and happiness to man. Whosoever falls short, GOD himself pronounces accursed. And will the UNCHANGEABLE go back from his purpose; make abatement in his demands; or come to a composition with his creatures? No verily. He is of one mind, and who can turn him‡. It were easi-

† Sermons by JOHN WILKINSON, Vol. II. pag. 273.

‡ Job xxxiii. 29.

er for heaven and earth to pass †, for all nature to be unhinged, and the universe to drop into dissolution ; than for one jot or tittle of this unalterable law to pass, without having a perfect accomplishment, ‡ in every the minutest instance.

BUT CHRIST's sufferings alone the law was not satisfied ; says ARASTIO — " Yet it was ;" replies Mr. Wesley—Then if the indefatigable and important labours of his life, all his exemplary and shining graces, must be mere superfluities. At least, they could have no merit, but were necessary only as a way of setting us an example.

The Prophet was of another mind. The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness sake. By this righteousness, not only by his sufferings, he will magnify the law and make it honorable.—The Apostle was of another mind. GOD sent forth his SON, made of a woman, made under the law. What ? Only to bear its curse ? Only to undergo penalty ? Not to fulfil its preceptive part ? Which is chiefly the principal part in every law ; and to enforce which all penalties are added — You yourself ought to be of another mind. For you have already and truly observed, that pardon and acceptance always go together. " In the same moment that GOD forgives we are the sons of GOD." And wherefore ? The reason is, because the sufferings of a sinner, and the obedience of a son, went together in the REDEEMER. And without this union, the redemption of man had not been complete.

" The law required only the alternative, obey or die."—Some of our errors are less considerable ; this I take to be a first-rate mistake. According to this supposition, *Cain*, and *Jud*, and all the damned, are righteous. Because they *are* they bear the curse ; they suffer everlastingly ; and thereby conform to one of the law's alternatives.—One of the law's alternatives ? No Here I am wrong. It is one of *your* alternatives. The divine law knows no such thing. No law on earth knows any such thing. Sanctions

† Luke xiii. 32.

‡ Rom. xiii. 10.

and penalties annexed to a law, are never looked upon as equivalent to obedience; but only as preservatives from disobedience.—In all the compass of your reading, have you ever met with a law, that makes such proposals to its subjects? “Conform to the regulations established, and you shall enjoy my privileges, you shall share my honors. Or, if you chuse to violate all my wholesome institutions, only submit to the penalty, and you shall have an equal right to the immunities and preferments.”

“The law required no man to obey and die too.”—But did it not require a transgressor to obey and die? If not, then transgression robs the law of its right, and vacates the obligation to obedience.—Did it not require the SURETY for sinful man, to obey and die? If the SURETY is only, he only delivers from punishment. But this affords no claim to life; no title to a reward. Unless you can produce some such edict from the court of heaven, for this, and thou shalt live. I find it written, “In keeping thy commandments there is great reward.” Now were I to read, in undergoing thy curse, there is the same reward.—Whereas, when we join the active and passive obedience of our LORD; the peace speaking blood, with the life-giving righteousness; both made infinitely meritorious, and infinitely efficacious, by the divine glory of his person; how full does our justification appear! how firm does it stand! it has all that the law can demand, both for our exemption from the curse, and for our title to bliss.

Before I take my leave of this topic, let me notice one supposition, for which your way of thinking needs the juster ground. Suppose, our LORD JESUS CHRIST had yielded a perfect conformity to the precept without ever submitting to the penalty; would this have been sufficient for the justification of a sinner? Here is one of your alternatives performed. Upon the foot of your principles, therefore, it would, it must have been sufficient.—But this is so wild an opinion, so contrary to the whole current of scripture, that to produce it, is to refute it.

Where scripture ascribes the whole of our salvation to the death of CHRIST, a part of his humanity is put for

the whole. To this Mr. Wesley objects; "I cannot allow it without proof."—I wish you would remember the golden rule, (of doing as you would be done by) and, since you insist upon proof from others, not be so sparing of it in your own cause: I wish likewise you would impartially consider what Aspasio has advanced, upon the subject—has he not given you the proof you demand?—"No; he was obedient unto death is no proof at all"—But is that the only thing urged? If one argument is inadequate, must all be inclusive? Because you have routed one detachment, have you therefore conquered the whole army? However let us see, whether this detachment, weak as you suppose it, may not be able to sustain our attack.

Does not the scripture ascribe the whole of your salvation to the death of CHRIST? To this question Aspasio replies, this part of our LORD's meritorious humiliation is by a very usual figure put for the whole—the death of CHRIST includes not only his sufferings, but his obedience—the shedding of his blood was at once the grand instance of his sufferings, and the finishing act of his obedience; in this view it is considered, and thus it is represented by his own ambassador, who, speaking of his divine master, says, "He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."—"This, you reply, is no proof at all, as it does not necessarily imply any more, than that he died in obedience to the FATHER."

How do some people love to cramp the enlarged, and debase the magnificent sense of scripture! surely this text implies; and not implies only, but forcibly expresses both the active and passive obedience of CHRIST. This is what the following clause confirms—let common sense be judge—obedient, not barely in death, but unto death, like that expression of JERIOVAH, by the prophet, unto hoary hairs I will carry you.—Does not this give us a retrospect view of youth and manhood, as well as lead our attention forward to old age! in like manner, obedient unto death. Does not this refer us to all the previous duties and virtues of a righteous walk; while it leads us to the closing scene

of all, a resigned exit? Does it not most naturally mean, obedient through the whole course of life, even to the last all completing instance, a voluntary submission to death? How easy and obvious is this interpretation? How grand and graceful is this meaning!

I can no more admire your taste (considered) as a critic, than I can admire your doctrine (considered) as a divine. — Give me the expositions of scripture, which act, not like the nocturnal damp, but like the morning sun: not shrivelling and contracting, but opening and expanding those flowers of Paradise the truths of the gospel, that they may display all their charming beauties, and breathe out all their reviving odours. I think, upon the whole, we have very sufficient cause to assert and to abide by our assertion; that when the scripture ascribes the whole of our salvation to the death of CHRIST, a part of his humiliation is put for the whole; and in thus speaking, the HOLY SPIRIT copies after himself. For, if the death inflicted on the first Adam included every evil consequent upon the fall; the depravity, as well as the misery of the creature, it was meet that the death to which the second Adam submitted, should include every good, needful for our recovery; the obedience as well as the sufferings of the REDEEMER. It was meet that the price, expressed by the same word, should be as extensive as the punishment.

“But how does it appear that he undertook this before the foundation of the world?” At what time does Mr. Wesley suppose, that CHRIST undertook the work? Not till sin entered and man apostatized? Was it then an incidental (upstart) expedient, fetched in to remedy some unforeseen disaster? Was it a device, which owed its birth to some unexpected contingency, occasioned by the perverseness of the creature? Far, far from it.—It was the grand, original, all comprehending plan, the way in which GOD, long before time commenced, decreed to manifest the glory of his grace, and the lustre of all his perfections. The world was made as a proper Theatre, on which to display and execute this most magnificent scheme; and all the revolutions of human affairs like so many under plots in

the Drama, are subservient to the accomplishment of this capital design—"Known unto GOD are all his works," determined by GOD are all his counsels, from the beginning of the world, more especially this grandest of all the divine dispensations; this master-piece of his unsearchable wisdom.

"But was this by a positive covenant between CHRIST and the FATHER?" *Aspasio* proceeds to illustrate and confirm the doctrine of an everlasting covenant between the almighty FATHER and his co-equal SON. He produces several texts of scripture, to each of which you object as insufficient for his purpose: each of your objections I shall answer, only by adding a short comment, explanatory of their spirit and force—"This proves no previous contract," that is, I deny it, and therefore it cannot prove your point. "Neither does this prove any such thing." That is, I cannot or will not see the proof. And therefore, there is none.—"That expression does not necessarily imply any more" than I please to allow—"In the way of method he had chosen;" of which I am the sole complete judge, and my judgment ought to be decisive in the case.—Thus would Mr. *Wesley* have, not *Aspasio* only, but the public also, receive his dictates (*tanquam a Tripod.*) as absolute oracles. For here is only bare assertion, or bare denial, without any vouchers, but his own word, without any authority, but his own declaration.

In psalm the xliii, the conditions of the covenant are circumstantially recorded, which were the incarnation and obedience of the eternal SON, "A holy hast thou prepared me—lo! I come to do thy will." "Nay, here is no mention of any covenant, nor any thing from which it can be inferred." *How many times shall I adjure thee,* said *Ahab* to *Muchah*, *that thou tell me nothing but that which is true?* And how many times shall I intreat Mr. *Wesley* to object nothing, without assigning some reason for his objection? At least not to trifle of convincing my judgment, and converting me to his opinion by a bare say

so.—But I have done—perhaps I have trespassed upon the patience of the reader, in expressing my disappointment so frequently; perhaps I may also bear too hard upon Mr. Wesley in asking for proofs, when it may be no small difficulty to produce them. To return—“Nay here is no mention of any covenant, nor any thing from which it can be inferred.”—That the word covenant is not mentioned is very true, that there is no reference to any such thing is not so certain: let us consider the whole passage—“sacrifice and burnt-offering thou didst not require:” if sacrifices and slain beasts are not the object of the divine complacency, in what will the LORD delight? The next words declare, “A body hast thou prepared me:” since the law cannot be fulfilled without doing, nor justice satisfied without dying, “Lo! I come, says the second person in the TRINITY, to undertake both, since this undertaking must be accomplished, by ONE who is finite, that he may die; and infinite, that he may conquer death; I will accomplish it in the divine and human nature. For this purpose a body hast thou prepared me, in this body lo! I come, willing and cheerfully I come, to perform, to sustain, to fulfill all; and so to do thy great, thy gracious will.”—May we not rationally suppose this spoken by way of (restipulation, or) compliance with the FATHER’s demands? That the matter is thereby brought to a solemn contract?

Dr. *Hammond* thought this no irrational supposition, therefore gives us, upon the following words, a perfectly corresponding comment. In the volume of the book it is written of me. “Which is no other than a bill, or roll of contract between the FATHER and CHRIST; wherein is supposed to be written the agreement, preparatory to that great work of CHRIST’s incarnation, wherein he, undertaking to fulfil the will of GOD, to perform all active, and also all passive obedience, even unto death, had the promise from GOD, that he should become the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him.”

Thus says our learned countryman. And what says the blessed Apostle? Whose exposition and application of the

passage, you seem to have forgotten, at least not to have thoroughly weighed. Having quoted the passage, argued from it, and displayed the benefits obtained by this all-sufficient propitiation, he adduces a text from Jeremiah relating to this very subject, and explaining its nature ; whereof the HOLY GHOST also is a witness ; of what ? of the justification and sanctification of sinners, both founded on both effected by, the sacrifice of the dying JESUS. Transactions which both the Prophet and the Apostle consider under the notion of the covenant, as is plain from the following quotation, " For after that he had said before, this " is the covenant which I will make with them in those " days." Hence it appears, that the author to the Hebrews saw something in the words of the Psalmist, from which the doctrine of a covenant might be inferred.

Another copy of this grand treaty is recorded Isai. xlix. from the first to the sixth verse. " I have read them but " cannot find a word about it in all those verses ; they contain neither more nor less than a prediction of the salvation of the Gentiles." They contain a prediction and somewhat more, they describe the way whereby this most desirable event shall be brought to pass. This the LORD himself declares shall be by way of covenant ; " I will give " thee for a covenant to the people."—This verse we may look upon as a key to the preceding. It teaches us to consider them as descriptive of the august covenant ; of its great establishment, its parties, and its terms :—indeed the verses themselves lead us to the same view, for what is a covenant ? A contract, wherein a condition is prescribed ; a promise is made, and both are ratified by a mutual agreement—The condition is prescribed in those words ; " Thou art my servant O Israel ", in whom I will " be glorified." The promise is made in those words,

* Israel is the name of the Church, often given to her in this Prophecy, CHRIST and his Church, by virtue of the union between them, have the same name. As she is sometimes called by his name, " The LORD our righteousness," So he is here called by her name Israel. See Jer. xxxiii. 16.

"Thou shalt raise up the tribes of Jacob; restore the pre-served of Israel, and be my salvation unto the ends of the earth." The agreement is specified or implied in the words ("I have spent my strength for nought, yet) surely my judgement is with the LORD, and my work with my GOD."

The great vitringa, after having expounded the whole clause, concludes in this manner: "Antequam ab his verbis, sensu fecundissimis, summam doctrinæ evangelicæ complexis, discedam, monere velim, eadem clarissime deformare totum mysterium conventionis pacis, inter Deum patrem & Messiam filium ejus, in humane carne apparituum, initæ, perinde ac in locis quæ ex aliis excerpto, *Psal.* xl. 7. *Zech.* vi. 13. Pater ut Dominus, filio ut Messia: offert gloriam longe amolissimam, meditationis & salvationis Judæorum & gentium, quæ gloria, omnium quæ mente concipi possunt, est maxima, sub lege sive suo conditione profundissimi obsequii servilis; eaque stipulatio utrinque ratihabetur*."

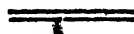
If upon a stricter review, this prophecy be found to express no such thing as a covenant, I am very willing to give up the proof. So much the rather as it makes no part of Aspasio's discourse, is only just mentioned in a note; and stands not in the main body, but only as a corps de reserve.

By the covenant of works, man was bound to obey in his own person.—Here you take Aspasio up very short, and reply, "So he is under the covenant of grace, though not in order to justification." This is the very thing he means. Nor could you easily have mistaken his meaning if you had only done him so small a piece of justice as to read the whole paragraph, of which, since you seem either willingly or through inadvertence to be ignorant, I will beg leave to transcribe it;—"Between the covenant of works, and the

* Vitring. in loc. Before I leave this paragraph which is so rich in sense, and contains the very substance of evangelical doctrine, I would observe that it most clearly and exactly delineates the mysterious council of peace, planned between GOD the FATHER, and his divine SON. The whole passes into a solemn contract, and is ratified on either side.

“covenant of grace, this I apprehend is the difference. By the former, man was indispensably bound to obey in his own person, by the latter, the obedience of his **SUBJECT** is accepted instead of his own.—The righteousness required by both, is not sincere, but complete, and is proportioned to the abilities of fallen man, but to the severity of the law, and the majesty of the **LAWGIVER**.” You see the whole argument turns upon a complete righteousness, such as satisfies the law, and is an adequate ground for justification: This, I imagine, fallen man is not obliged by the covenant of grace to perform, if so, we shall be at a loss to find any such thing as grace; if so, we can have no hope of obtaining salvation with eternal glory. There will be too much reason for applying to all mankind those awful words of the Prophet: “In the day that thou mayst make thy plant to grow, and in the morning thou mayst make thy seed to flourish; but the harvest shall be a heap, in the day of grief and desperate sorrow.”

Blessed be **GOD** the melancholy strain is superseded.—Though the terms in the first covenant were a perfect obedience, though the terms once fixed continue unalterable, yet in the new covenant there is a change and substitution as to the performer; without any relaxation as to the performance. Instead of personal obedience we are justified through the obedience of our **MEDIATOR**, we are made the righteousness of **GOD** in him: that is, we are furnished with a plea, as prevalent for our justification and admission into the divine favour, as if we had retained our innocence untainted; and in every respect conformed ourselves to the righteousness which the law of **GOD** requires*.—Thus the salvation of sinners, neither clashes with the truth, nor interferes with the justice of the supreme **LEGISLATOR**.—On the contrary, it becomes a faithful and just procedure of the most high **GOD**, to justify him that believeth on **JESUS**.



* 2 Cor. v. 21.

The obedience of our surety is accepted instead of our own. "This is neither a safe, nor a scriptural way of speaking."—That the obedience of CHRIST is accepted for our justification, is a doctrine warranted by scripture, it may therefore very justly be reckoned a scriptural way of speaking. And if his obedience is accepted for this purpose, our own, was it ever so considerable, could come in for no share of the work. Our own, though ever so gorgeously arrayed, must stand aside, or be cast into shades, just as the stars hide their diminished, or rather extinguished heads, when the sun appears in his meridian splendour, because the obedience of CHRIST is of infinite dignity and value. And infinite value is such, as not only transcends all other services, but renders them mere nothings in the comparison. For this reason, the apostle counted all endowments, but loss for CHRIST, and the prophet represents all nations as nothing before GOD.

"I would simply say, we are accepted through the beloved."—If you rightly understood what is meant, when the apostle speaks of being accepted in the BELOVED, you would have no fault to find with Aspasio's comment. St. Paul means we are accepted, not by any obedience performed in our own persons, but solely by the obedience of that infinitely excellent, and infinitely beloved ONE CHRIST JESUS, whose righteousness being imputed to us, and put upon us, causes us not only to be pardoned, but to be highly esteemed, dearly beloved, and blessed with all spiritual blessings.

Here I cannot but observe, that you have changed the apostle's expression. He says, "Accepted in the beloved;" I am willing to believe this was an oversight, you had no sinister design, but still I think you should take more heed to your pen, and not alter the inspired word, lest you blemish the language or injure the sense. Perhaps you will ask, what difference is there between accepted through, and accepted in, the beloved? I will illustrate the difference by a similitude. A creditable house-keeper gives a good character to a servant that leaves him, by virtue of which he is accepted, and admitted to some other valuable employ.—

This character is his introduction, yet this makes no addition to his real value. Acceptance through the beloved, may import no more, than such an admission through such a recommendation. When we are accepted in the beloved, implies not only a recommendatory passport from CHRIST, but a real union with CHRIST, whereby we are incorporated into his sacred body, and partake us truly of his righteousness, as the members partake of the life which animates the head. By this our persons are really ennobled. This imparts the highest dignity to our nature. We are not only recommended to, but rendered meet for, the favour, the complacency, the beatific presence of GOD, being one with JESUS, and therefore loved even as JESUS himself is loved.

The second covenant was not made with Adam or any of his posterity, but with CHRIST in those words. "For any authority you have from these words, you might as well have said, it was made with the HOLY GHOST." No; CHRIST, not the HOLY GHOST, was the seed of the woman.—This is an answer, much in your own strain.—But let us consider farther.

You allow, I presume, that the first covenant was made with Adam, as our public federal head.—That all his posterity were included in it, being to stand or fall together with him: herein, says the Apostle, "Adam was a figure of him that was to come." If so, the second covenant must be made with CHRIST, as our public federal head. He and all his seed are included in it, and as it was impossible for him to miscarry, they must be joint partakers of his benefits. Accordingly, he is styled the MEDIATOR of the new covenant, by whose most acceptable and prevailing interposition, all its blessings are obtained: he is styled the surety of the covenant, engaging to pay the whole debt for poor insolvent creatures: the debt of penal suffering, and the debt of perfect obedience.—The testator of the covenant, whose are its riches, and whose are its privileges, who has also of his unbounded goodness bequeathed them as so many inestimable legacies to indigent men. Methinks those are such charming truths, such divinely comfortable

doctrines, that you should consider them thoroughly before you oppose them, lest you do a greater act of unkindness towards your readers, than that which is charged, though it was extremely injurious, upon Job: "Thou hast stripped the naked of their clothing, and sent widows away empty." And when you are disposed to consider those points thoroughly, ask yourself this question. Is it possible to conceive that CHRIST should be the MEDIATOR, the surety, the testator of the covenant, if it was not made with him and the execution of it undertaken by him?—Or, is it possible to suppose, that the all glorious SON of GOD should be the MEDIATOR, the surety, the testator of the covenant, yet leave others to perform the conditions? which are incomparably the most important, interesting, and difficult parts of the transaction?

"These words were not spoken to CHRIST, but of him" True of him as given for a covenant of the people. "There is not the least intimation of any such covenant." You will not deny that **CHRIST** is signified by the seed of the woman.—It is said, he shall, a language expressing authority, and requiring conformity, as **CHRIST** is the supreme authority, and requiring conformity, as **CHRIST** is the supreme uncontrollable GOD, this could not be required; and would never have been said, without his actual consent; here then is implied his approbation of the office. It is farther said, the serpent shall bruise his heel.—He shall become incarnate, and utter a life of much sorrow, and many tribulations, shall be put to a most tormenting death. Here is the condition of the covenant. It is added, he shall bruise the serpent's head, shall destroy the works of the devil, and repair the ruins of the fall, shall deliver from the wrath deserved, and recover the inheritance forfeited.—Here is the recompence or reward of the covenant.

Should you ask; Is it supposable that Adam understood the words in this compass of meaning? Perhaps not. But if we do not understand them in a more exalted and extensive sense, than our first father; what advantage do we reap from the full revelation of the gospel?—The full reve-

lation of the gospel, pours as much light upon this, and other of the ancient oracles, as the experiments of our modern Anatomists have poured upon the structure and economy of the human body.—This grand original text, read with the comment of the new testament, speaks all that *Aspasio* has suggested; all that our fallen state could want, or our very hearts can wish.

You have mustered up several objections, yet there is room for more; I will therefore for once act as your auxiliary and turn against *Aspasio*. “He supposes the covenant to be made with CHRIST. Whereas the scripture represents the covenant as made with various men, particularly and personally, in various ages.”—True, it is recorded that GOD made a covenant with *Abraham* with *Isaac*, with *Jacob*, and with *David* the father of *Solomon*: But were they in a capacity to enter into covenant with their Maker; to stand for themselves or be surety for others? I think not—the passages mean no more, than the LORD’s manifesting, in an especial manner, the grand covenant to them; ratifying and confirming their personal interest in it, and farther assuring them that CHRIST, the great covenant head, should be of themselves, and spring from their seed.

This accounts for that remarkable and singular mode of expression, which often occurs in scripture; *I will make a covenant with them*; or, *this is my covenant with them*.—Yet there follows no mention of any condition, only a promise of unconditional blessings; because the former have already been performed, and nothing remains but to confer the latter; so that the meaning of the divine speaker is, I will admit them to an interest in this covenant, and make them partakers of its privileges.

I should now conclude, but Mr. *Wesley* will not suffer me to quit the subject. He farther insists, “The words manifestly contain, it not a covenant made with, a promise made to *Adam* and all his posterity.”—If not—he begins to hesitate in his assertion; to fluctuate in his opinion; and I could hope, to see his mistake.—“The words

“contain a promise”—And have you never read, that the covenant of GOD, or the various renewals and ratifications of the covenant of grace, are styled *covenants of promise*? Which consist of pure promises, and dispense free gifts?

Observe the tenour of the new covenant, as it stands engrossed by the pen of inspiration. *This is the covenant, which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the LORD, I will put my laws into their mind, and on their hearts will I write them: and I will be to them a GOD, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying know the LORD—for all shall know me, from the least of them, even unto the greatest of them—For, I will be merciful unto their unrighteousnesses, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.—Where are your conditions in this draught? Where are any terms required of impotent man? Is it not all promise from the beginning to the end? That repentance, and that faith, for whose conditionality you plead, are they not both comprehended in this heavenly deed? And comprehended under the form of blessings vouchsafed, not of tasks enjoined.—Does the contract run in this manner? I require and command. Or in this strain? I grant and bestow. The LORD says, *I will put my laws; I will write them.* The work shall not be laid on my creatures, but done by myself. *They shall be my people, and I will remember their sins no more.* What? Provided they perform such and such duties. I find no such clause.—Ail is absolutely free; dependent on no performance of ours; but flowing from sovereign, supreme, self-influenced goodness.*

* Just such is that delightful declaration, *I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do good; but I will put my fear in their heart, that they shall not depart from me.—*What you call conditions must be comprised in my fear.—Another of your conditions, I presume, is, perseverance unto the end. This, in the covenant of grace, is not enjoined, but secured. Thus the covenant becomes not transient, but everlasting. There seems to be as great a difference, between suspending the benefits on human endeavours, and grounding them on di-

vine agency, as between hanging the anchor on the top of the mast, and fixing it at the bottom of the sea.

Let me add one more text, which now occurs to my thoughts, *Ye are the children of the Prophets, and of the covenant which GOD made with our Fathers, saying unto Abraham, and in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed* *. Blessed with all blessings, temporal, spiritual, eternal—*In thy seed*—That is in CHRIST—Without any regard to qualifications or deeds of their own, either by virtue of an interest in his consummately excellent actions, and consummately precious sufferings. This is still exhibited to our contemplation, as the fruit of the covenant of grace; as for the thing for which it makes provision, not introductory to, but consequent upon, our participation of it.

If therefore, in speaking of holiness and obedience, we represent them as the promises, rather than the demands of the covenant, we evidently follow the Apostle's example.— Shall we, in order to avoid the charge of *anti-concupiscence* rush into this absurdity? I am persuaded you could not wish to see so egregious a piece of folly, even in your enemy; much less in

Yours, &c.

* Act. iii. 25.

LETTER IX.

REV. SIR,

I WISH you would consider with some attention, that emphatical statement of the apostle, since ye knew the grace of GOD in truth. He intimates, that we may have a knowledge of grace, which is not genuine; not free from corrupt mixture, not pure. It may be so discoloured with error, or blended with so much of the law, as no longer to appear like itself.—The language of such persons, is somewhat like the language of the Israelites, after their return from captivity, who spoke neither the *Hebrew*, nor the Heathenish dialect, but expressed themselves half in the speech of *Assyria*, and half in the speech of *Sion*.

It is true, says *depon*, I cannot perform the conditions. "It is not true," says *Mr. Wesley*. This is pretty blunt, and pretty bold too; but it is, in effect, asserting, that a man dead in trespasses and sins is able to perform condition. *Mr. Wesley* is not aware, that "CHRIST strengthen-
"ing us," is one of the benefits of the covenant, comprehended in these words, *I will put my laws into their minds*.

"The conditions of the new covenant are, repent and believe."—It has been already shewn, that they are represented by the HOLY GHOST, not as conditions, but as blessings; not as conditions required, but as blessings

bestowed; not conditions on which depends the accomplishment of the covenant; but happy fruits, or precious effects, of the covenant; made, and making good to sinners who are wholly without strength.

'Tis equally true, says *Aspasio*, this is not a parallel at my hands. " 'Tis equally true, says Mr. *Wesley*, that is absolutely false."—This is doubtless, a *hoax* trust.—It behoves us to provide some armour of proof for our defence; and this the scripture furnishes abundantly. It furnishes us with more than *robust & its triplex*. In scripture sets forth justification, salvation, and all blessedness, as things perfectly free; detached from all works, dependent on no conditions, but the gifts of sovereign goodness, and infinitely rich grace.

Though you, Sir, treat *Aspasio* in so unceremonious a manner, we will be more complaisant; you shall receive such entertainment from us, as the king of Babylon's Ambassadors received from *Hecckiah*. We will on this occasion, shew you the *house of our precious things, the silver and the gold, the spices and the precious ointment*, and if not, all, yet some of the house of our armour*.

We are saved, that is, we have all the benefits of the new covenant. By grace.—By grace ye are saved.—It is of grace and no more of works.—Who hath saved us, not according to our works, but according to his purpose and grace†.

Freely—Being justified freely.—The things that are freely given to us of GOD.—Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely‡.

By way of gift—If thou knewest the gift of GOD—the gift of GOD is eternal life.—The free gift came upon all men, to justification of life§.

* 2 Kings 22. 29.

† Eph. 2. 8. Rom. 4. 5. 1 Tim. 1. 9.

‡ Rom. 11. 34. 1 Cor. 1. 28. Rev. 22. 17.

§ John 4. 10. Rom. 6. 23. v. 18.

Without the law—The righteousness of GOD without the law—In it we might be justified, not by the works of the law—It is the meritorious work of the law *.

Not by works—Not of works, but of a man that calleth us. Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us—Not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law †.

But righteousness, not performed, but imputed—Faith (in CHRIST, as our aid) is imputed for righteousness.—GOD imputeth righteousness, with our work—To whom it (that is the merit of a dying and rising SAVIOUR) shall be imputed ‡.

Not by guiltless behaviour but by remission of sins—Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.—GOD was in CHRIST, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. To give knowledge of salvation by the remission of their sins §.

Not each by himself, but all by one—They shall reign in life, by one CHRIST JESUS.—By the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous.—By one offering, he hath perfected for ever those that are sanctified ¶.

By faith alone—Being justified by faith.—A man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law—Through him, all that believe are justified from all things ¶.

Not on account of faith, as a condition performed; but on account of CHRIST, the vessel of inestimable price; which faith receives, applies, and uses.—who has by himself purged away our sins, by himself finished our transgressions,

* Rom. 10. 4. Gal. 3. 12. 13.

† Rom. 10. 3. Tit. 2. 14. Phil. 3. 9.

‡ Rom. 4. 22. 23. 24. 25.

§ Phil. 2. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17.

¶ Rom. 5. 17, 18, 19. 11. 2. 14.

‡ Rom. 7. 2. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

made reconciliation for our iniquities, and brought in an everlasting righteousness.

This is the doctrine of scripture. Because it is of the greatest importance, you see, with what care it is stated, and with what copiousness displayed, with what zeal it is urged, and with what vigilance guarded.—How solicitously the sacred writers use every form of speech that may exclude all human works; may set aside all conditions and pre requisites, in order to supersede all glorying, and ascribe the whole of our justification to the free grace of GOD, and the sole merits of CHRIST.

After all these testimonies of scripture, shall we still maintain, that the covenant of grace consists of conditions; depends upon conditions; is such as we cannot expect to have made good till certain conditions are, by us, duly and truly fulfilled? Dagon may as well stand in the presence of the ark, as such a notion in the face of these evangelical texts.

All, all is free to us sinners, though it was not free to CHRIST our SAVIOUR.—He paid the price. He performed the conditions. If you would know what price was paid; what conditions were performed, and on what terms we inherit the blessing; you, Sir, may receive information from Mr. John Wesley, who says in his comment; “All the blessings of the new covenant are secured to us, by the one offering of CHRIST.” According to this commentator, they are not only procured for us, but secured to us. How could either of these be true—Much more, how could the latter be fact—if the blessings were suspended on any performance or any acquisition of ours? If I am not to enjoy them until I discharge this, or that duty, they are not procured for me; if I am not to enjoy them unless I become possessed of this or that quality, they are not secured to me; not secured to me, as the estate is to an heir, even whilst he is a minor, but only as the prize is to a racer, in case, by exerting his speed and his strength, he arrives

first at the goal, which was never net-tailed security, but allowed to become a liability.

As to this point, *wherein* I receive information from the prophet Zechariah, *in the name of the covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit, wherein was no water.* Thy prisoners, those wretched creatures, who were in a state of guilt, and under the sentence of death, subject to the tyranny of the devil, and liable to the damnation of hell — In this dismal state they were, as in a pit unbottomably deep; from which there seemed no possibility of escape, nor any method of deliverance. A pit, in which there is no water, nothing but absolute misery, without a gleam of hope, or a drop of comfort. I have sent them forth into a place of liberty, where they obtain pardon and enjoy peace, are satisfied with the plenteousness of my house, and drink of my pleasures as out of a river. All this, by the blood of thy covenant. — Blood was the righteous term, blood was the dreadful requirement, even that infinitely precious blood of CHRIST, in which the concept of our freedom was established, and by which its rich blessings are procured. Which is called *thy covenant*, O daughter of Zion, thou church of the first-born, because it was made in thy divine surety, and for thy unspeakable good.

This is not only false, but most dangerously false — if we allow this, antinomianism comes in with a full tide. Pray, Sir, what do you mean by *antinomianism*? Such a contrariety to the law, as debases its dignity; deprives it of its proper honor and proper end;†

Surely then, not *Athanasius*, but Mr. Kelly's tenets, are chargeable with this kind of heterodoxy. Since they would

... τούτων σὺν ἰσομείνων.

• **Pay no more.** The world is not controlled by CHRIST, but by its church.

3. The use of the Government's power is not unlimited. The use of the power has now in substance been limited to the use of the power by the Government of an obedient and obedient citizen. The use of the power is not in the hands of the Government.

cause the law to be put off with a wile; when millions of talents are its due—oblige it to be content with errant deficiency, when the most sinless obedience, and the most exalted perfection are what it demands.

Do you mean by antinomianism, such a contrariety to the law, as disregards its duties, and violates its precepts? Then the apostle *Paul* shall reply, "The grace of GOD, which bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men; teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly."—*The grace of GOD*, is infinitely free favour, of which we have a specimen in the preceding texts, which seems to be shackled with conditions, or meanly dependent on human endeavours—the grace, requiring nothing of the creature, but bringing salvation, spiritual and eternal salvation, finished by the incarnate CREATOR, and free for the chiefest of sinners—This grace being revealed in the gospel, being discerned by faith, and thus appearing in lustre, and with power, to all men—To men of every rank, every age, every character; making no difference between the servant and his master, between the ruddy stripling and the hoary sire; between the vile prostitute and the chaste vestal, but opening its inexhaustible treasures, to be received by one as well as the other—This grace does what? "Caused antinomianism" or practical ungodliness, "to come in with a full tide?" Quite the reverse—it expresses it like an immovable barrier. It teaches us to deny, to renounce ungodliness, all ungodliness, not only external gross abominations, but *worldly lusts* also, every vicious inclination, and every irregular desire. Further, it teaches us to live soberly, with regard to ourselves, righteously towards our neighbours, and godly to our great CREATOR.

The original word is particularly beautiful and significant, it is not *prescribeth*, by way of rule, nor *emphatheth*, by way of authority; but *teacheth*, by way of instruction, pointeth out the effectual method of obeying the precepts, and conforming to the rule. A great master commands his slave to write, or make a proficiency in writing. A kind tutor forms him to it, shews him how to do it, and renders, what

otherwise would be almost, perhaps an impracticable task, both easy and pleasant. The *grace* clearly manifested in the understanding, and cordially apprehended by the will, renders every duty of business both practicable and pleasant; it gives us a heart, and a hand, and ability to exercise ourselves unto universal goodlines.

CHRIST has performed all that was conditionary for me, says *Ashasin*. "Has he repented and believed for you?" Says Mr. *Wesley*; a question already answered in the dialogue.—"No; replies Mr. *Wesley*, not answered, but evaded. He performed all that was conditionary in the covenant of works, is nothing to the purpose, for we are not talking of that, but of the covenant of grace." Give me leave to tell you, Sir that you are greatly mistaken here, we are talking; at least we ought to be talking of the covenant of works, when we talk of the covenant, which CHRIST came under. It was a covenant of works to him, which, by his execution of it, became a covenant of grace for us. He became answerable for our debt, the debt was exacted without the least abatement. In this respect GOD spared not his own son. And his agonies, the labour, are not such the effects of a covenant of works?

CHRIST is called the *surety of a better covenant*; that is, a surety provided and admitted by a better covenant; in this peculiarity, infinitely momentous and comfortable, the new covenant is better, because it brings in a substitute, to discharge what was contracted under the old, which neither provided, nor allowed, nor knew any such thing.—It is written, CHRIST was made under the law; therefore not under a covenant of grace. If you can show me, in the construction of the law, any hint of faith in the merits of another, or any mention of repentance unto life, I will retract my opinion, that CHRIST performed whatever was conditionary; I will do honor to those gentle expressions, and submit to those cogent arguments, "It is not true—" "is not true to the purpose—" "is absolutely false."

"If CHRIST's perfect obedience be ours we have no more need of pardon than CHRIST himself. The consequence is good, you have started an objection which you cannot answer."—It is answered in the dialogue.—

whether in a satisfactory manner, leaving the reader must determine. But to suppose, as some have done, that it implies no more, than the *one offering* *he hath perfected for ever* *that* *is* *justified*. Let me transcribe your own * explanation of this passage.—"He *"hath done"* (observe, you *must* speak of CHRIST's doing; in this place *only* of CHRIST's doing, yet I would not be so injurious to your good sense, as to imagine that you exclude his *suffering*.) *"all that was needful, in order to their full reconciliation with GOD."* This exposition I approve, as far as it goes, only you have omitted one very weighty circumstance, comprehended in the word *"ever,"* by this doing and suffering, believers are fully and perfectly reconciled, not for a day only, or for any particular time, but *for ever*. The pardon is irrevocable; the blessing durable. Not like the moon, which now waxes, and anon wanes, but like the sun, which is always the same; ever shines with the same plenitude of rays; and needs only to smile, in order to appear unobscuredly bright.

This requires the of a more direct answer to your difficulty. The repeated pardon, which believers implore, is only a witness bearing to the truth, or a repeated manifestation of it to our consciences.—Will you find fault with this doctrine? Might you not, for the very same reason, say, if the moment of CHRIST's death, was absolutely perfect, there could be no need of his intercession at GOD's right hand? *i.e.*, for the actual application of the great monument, and the continual communication of its happy fruits, this intercession is necessary. So, though our justification is complete, though our sins have all been laid upon our LORD; and are not to be done away by some duties of our own, but already done away by the sacrifice of HIMSELF; yet the application of this blessing, the revelation of it to our hearts, is daily, hourly, incessantly needed. Therefore he saith, speaking of his visit to the church, *I will visit it every moment.*—Whereby? In what manner? What spiritual blessings correspond with visiting the church and?

desire enough to blush at an attempt, to palm upon the public, such an apparent misrepresentation of our venerable brother.

"The same great truth is manifestly taught in the xxxix article"—What? That CHRIST, by his death alone, or by shedding his blood alone without fulfilling the law perfectly, satisfied for the sins of the world! Then the articles and the homilies most flatly contradict one another—Upon this you ask; "Is it therefore fair, is it honest, for any one to plead the articles of our church in defence of absolute predestination?" Indeed, Sir, I know not what you mean by this interrogatory, or at what you aim. Does ASPASIO plead the articles for any such purpose? Not that he should be afraid, in case there was an evident occasion, to advance such a plea, and perhaps might put Mr Wesley to greater difficulty than he is aware of, in order to elude the force of it.—But he does not in this place come within view of the point; nor so much as remotely hint at it. No, nor in any part of the three volumes, does he once touch upon *absolute predestination*, much less does he plead the articles of our church in its defence. So that your inferential word "therefore," is a conclusion without premises.

Absolute predestination is a phrase not to be found in all the dialogues, or in any of the letters, but it is a phrase which Mr. Wesley thinks to be alarming and disgusting, on which Mr. Wesley has learned to say many horrible and shocking things; therefore he is right and wrong, be it true or false, ASPASIO shall be charged with the obnoxious expression.—When he mentions predestination, it is in the very words of scripture; without dwelling upon the subject; without resting his cause upon it; without attempting either to explain, or to establish it. This he leaves, and ever will leave, to clearer heads and abler pens—As to your "absolute," this is not what ASPASIO speaks, but what Mr. Wesley would make him speak, a word, which in this

the adequate price of our redemption. Yet Mr. Wesley is puffed to exclude the latter; and ventures to affirm that he has the authority of our Church for such an opinion, and for such a practice.

connection he never used, nor so much as dream of using, for which reason, I call it, not his, but yours — May I not then retort your own question? And ask, is it fair, is it honest, to put into your friend's mouth words which he never used, and then exclaim against them?

What follows in this paragraph is prolixious indeed, "seeing the xviith article barely defines the term" that is, the church does not believe the doctrine, nor require any such belief from her members? Why then does she select it for one of the articles? Why pronounce it agreeable to GOD's word? Why forbid disputation against it? Pity, but we had been acquainted with this fine distinction when we were students at Ox ford—We then declared our approbation of the academical statutes; we engaged to observe them all and confirmed our engagement with an oath.—But how easily might we have eluded the obligation, if, when called upon for conformity and obedience, this salvo had come into our heads; "The university does not in these statutes, set forth our duty, but barely defines the terms; she does not insist upon a conformity, but only flourishes a little upon terms, and leaves us to obey or disobey, as we shall feel ourselves inclined."

"Barely defines the term, without either affirming or denying the thing."—How! Does she not affirm the thing? when she styles it an excellent benefit of GOD? Declares it to be full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to the souls? That it greatly establishes and confirms their faith of eternal salvation, and fervently kindles their love towards GOD? "Not affirm the thing!"—When she expressly ascribes such fruits and consequences to it! This is not only affirming, but affirming; with the highest approbation, like proclaiming the king, and placing the crown upon his head.

In one part of your preservative, you enumerate, and very properly display, what you call "the five benefits of baptism." Suppose a Quaker, upon reading this passage should say, "Friend Wesley, thou barely deniest the term, thou neither affirmest nor deniest the thing—I is no proof that thou thyself believest a tittle of water baptism,

"or wouldst have thy readers believe the reality of any such ordinance." Should the Quaker argue thus, he would argue just like yourself. But I apprehend he would not be so boldly disingenuous, he would rather confess; "Friend John doth certainly maintain and believe these things; but his opinion is mistaken, and his arguments are inconclusive." "The xxix article totally overthrows predestination, and raises it from the foundation." If so, it makes one article contradict another; consequently, weakens the authority, and undermines the credibility of the n all. In this article are two points more particularly proper for our enquiry. The *great salvation*, and the *number of the saved*—I cannot but query, whether you believe the former, or rightly understand the latter?

The *great salvation*, expressed in the following words; "The offering of CHRIST once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual." If I take these words as I am enjoined, in the literal and grammatical sense, I must believe, that CHRIST engaged to satisfy offended justice, for every sin which I have committed, or shall commit, throughout my whole life. My past sins at that time, had no more existence, than my future sins have at this hour, but both were equally laid upon my LORD.

Having undertaken this greatest of all works, I must believe that he fully accomplished it; and actually satisfied for all my transgressions, of every kind and every date.—A possibility, or mere chance of being redeemed, can never be reckoned a perfect redemption; neither would our SAVIOUR have paid down a positive price for a precarious conditional good, much less would he have paid an immense, an infinite price, upon a bare uncertainty, whether it should take any effect, or ever obtain its desired end.—I believe therefore, that the satisfaction is made for me, that GOD has received the all-sufficient atonement in behalf of all my provocations, and that there is no more ground of condemnation for me a vile sinner, than there is room for the prosecution of an insolvent, all whose debts are defrayed, even to the very last mite.

The number of the world, expressed in these words—the sons of the *whole world*. This I acknowledge to be the language of scripture; and I promise myself you will bear with me, while I offer my thoughts, concerning the occasion and the import of such language.

In the *anteflavian* and *patriarchal* ages, the LORD JEHOVAH condescended his favour to a few particular families—When he formed his *Israel* into a commonwealth, he chose them to himself, and separated them from all other nations. To them he gave his oracles, his ordinances and his covenants, *even* he honored and indulged them with his divine presence: in this the *Israelites* gloried; they appropriated this privilege to themselves, and held other people at a distance, looking upon them as strangers, and without GOD in the world; hence that chosen seed spares not to say, ‘we are thine; thou never hast rule over them;’ “they were not called by thy name.”—At the commencement of the MESSIAH’S kingdom, the LORD purposed to change the *ceremonies*, and vary the dispensation, by admitting both *Jews* and *Gentiles* to an interest in the great salvation; as they were equally chargeable with sin, and equally liable to the curse, they should now stand upon a level; be equally sharers in that divine SAVIOUR, who submits to be made sin, and to be made a curse for both alike. This the HOLY GHOST expressly and repeatedly promised, *he* (that is, the REDEEMER who is to come) *shall speak peace unto the Heathen; his dominion shall be from sea even to sea and from the river even to the end of the earth*

Notwithstanding such prophecies, and such promises, our LORD himself, when he entered upon his ministry, acted a discriminating part, and kept up the partition wall; in pursuance of that declaration, *I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel*. When he sent forth his disciples to preach and to teach, he gave them also a command to shew the same partial regard, *go ye out into the way of the Gentiles*. This conduct of our LORD, bears un-

der the old testament and the new, confirmed the *Jews* in their self flattering notion, that they were, and ever should be, a favourite nation, and a peculiar people. The *Gentiles* on the other hand, were no less discouraged; apprehending that as they were, so they ever should be, *aliens from the common wealth of Israel*. But in order to convince the *Jews* of their mistake, in claiming the blessing of *Abraham* to themselves, and in order to assure the poor discarded *Gentiles* that they should be *fellow-heirs of the same body*; our *LORD*, in his last charge to his apostles, alters the sense of his commission, and enlarges the sphere of their several departments. It is now no longer, *go not into the way of the Gentiles*, but quite the reverse, *go teach all nations, all the world, yea, and every creature, whosoever believeth, whether Jew or Gentile, shall be saved*.

Still the *Jews* were hardly induced to give the right hand of fellowship to their brethren the *Gentiles*—for *St. Peter* cries, with some indignation, *not so LORD*. Still the *Gentiles*, hardly persuaded that they should be partakers of the grace, reasoned against themselves; *the LORD hath utterly separated me from his people*.—Therefore the *LORD*, to intercept all the depending objections of the latter, and to bring down the high disdainful imaginations of the former, declares in a variety of places, that the difference no longer subsists, that *CHRIST* has thrown down the partition wall, and laid all plain and common, and free—Though the giving of the law pertained to *Israel only*, the *LORD JESUS* gave himself a ransom for *ALL PEOPLE*. Though the paschal lamb extended its influence only to the circumcision, the *LAMB of GOD* is a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, even though it be not circumcised. And now *GOD* would have all men, whether bond or free, *Jews* or *Gentiles*, *Greeks* or *Barbarians*, to be saved, by coming unto the knowledge of the faith.

This account gives us the true cause, and points out the intended use, of such universal phrases. They are calculated to abate the pride of the *Jews*, to encourage the despised *Gentiles*, and by excluding none, they give encouragement for all to come, because, though every individual per-

son will not be saved, yet *whosoever* cometh shall in no wise be cast out.—By this interpretation, the phrase is neither inconsistent with other texts; neither does our church contradict himself.

Upon the whole, you will please to observe, that I should never have touched upon this subject, had not your objections, far fetched and forced as they are, given me a kind of challenge. And now I have touched upon the subject, it is not as a champion for the cause, but only to shew the weakness and the inconsistency of your arguing, how little you avail yourself even on a point, where you think opposition vain, and your arm irresistible.

“Believers, who are notorious transgressors in themselves, have a sinless obedience in CHRIST,” this passage you select as faulty, I presume, because it is opposite to your favourite tenet, “*perfection in personal holiness*.”—By *notorious*, I mean *acknowledged, confessed, indisputably such*. If you are not such a transgressor, why do you daily confess yourself “a miserable sinner?” Why do you acknowledge, that you are “tied and bound with the chain of your sins,” and declare before all men, that “there is no health in you?” All this Mr. Wesley speaks with his lips, and I would hope believes in his heart. Yet all this does not amount “to a *notorious* transgressor.” Pray then, good Sir, inform us, what sort of transgressor is described by all these expressions.

You cry out, “O *arraign* *song*!” the Psalmist would have taught you a better exclamation. If this is the case, let us rejoice with trembling—*are we notorious transgressors in ourselves?* The consequence of this is the strongest motive to humility—have we a *sinless* obedience in CHRIST? The belief of this is an abundant source of joy. When I add “*pleasing sound*” to James Whately’s “*Thomas Hall—am I, James Kelly?*” I am quite ashamed of your meanness, and grieved at your uncharitable railing. Unworthy is such a proceeding, either of the gentleman, the christian, or the man of letters. Unworthy the gentleman, to stigmatize by name, and expose to the most public injury. Unworthy the christian, whose charity concealed, rather

than divulgeth and proclaimeth upon the house tops.—Unworthy the man of sense, who knows that the mi-carriages of a pride sor, are no argument against the soundness of a doctrine; if they were, would not your own principles suffer? Nay, how could christianity itself stand?

Elijah failed in his resignation, and even Moses him self, unadvisedly with his lips. "It is true, says Mr. Wesley. But if you could likewise fix some blot upon venerable Samuel; and beloved Daniel, it would prove nothing." I have no desire to fix a blot, but if I find it in the most accomplished character, this proves the proposition, which Aspasius maintains, "that the very best of men all short, that the very best of men will be found guilty if tried by the righteous law—that the very best of men, have nothing more to plead for acceptance with the HIGH and HOLY one; than the criminal, who yesterday murdered his benefactor; to-morrow is to be executed for his crime, and is now flying to the redemption that is in CHRIST JESUS for the chief sinners.

"No scripture teaches that the holiness of christians is to be measured by that of any Jew." I should be afraid to advance such a position, after having read that general exhortation, *Be ye followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises*; and those more particular references to the ancient saints, comprized in the eleventh to the Hebrews. Were not they Jews? Does not the Apostle propose them as patterns for our imitation? Is not this his language, let us also in conformity to their practice?—The spirit of CHRIST was in them; and "they obtained, (even from the supreme JUDGE) a good report." Agreeably to this divine testimony, we are directed to learn from Abel, a fiduciary repentance on the great atonement, and from Enoch, a life of communion with a reconciled GOD. The Prophets are recommended to our contemplation, as "examples of suffering affliction, and of patience." Elijah is set before us an instance of persevering and successful prayer: and we are directed to walk in the steps of our father Abraham's faith. It was the counsel of an Apostle to others; this was the aim of an Apostle with regard to

himself ; therefore I think, it can never be unworthy of you or unfit for the most advanced among your Disciples. For my part, I shall reckon myself truly happy ; I shall bless the day, wherein I was born ; if I may but be enabled to follow the footsteps of these illustrious leaders, through

— — *Non passibus aëquis.*

That christians ought to rise above the level of the common Jews, I freely own. Mr. Wesley's mistake seems to lay in co-founding the common with the uncommon, in not discerning the difference between any and every ; between some and all. Some Jews were blessed with extraordinary endowments, they had distinguished communications of the spirit of wisdom and holiness. They were as the "stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land." Their great achievements and eminent attainments are described in the afore-mentioned chapter, which may truly be stiled the golden legend ; great things impossible to flesh and blood, they both performed and suffered. Such as characterize a saint of the highest rank.—To imitate these, is the duty of all christians, to equal them is the privilege of few.

Let me illustrate this sentiment ; the reader, I apprehend will hardly think it needs confirmation.—Every graduate in the University, much more every minister of the gospel, ought to exceed the school boy in learning and knowledge.—Yet there are often school boys with whom few ministers, and fewer graduates, will venture to compare themselves. A recent instance of this kind, we have in the famous Baratier. This wonderful youth when he was but four years old, spoke French to his mother, Latin to his father, and high Dutch, to his maid. At the age of six, he explained the Hebrew text, as ready as if it had been his native German. When other lads are scarce able to read with fluency and propriety their mother tongue, he was not only acquainted with, but master of, five several languages. In his eleventh year he published a learned latin dissertation, and translated a book of travels, out of Hebrew into

French. While a mere boy he was qualified to dispute with professors of the sciences, was honoured with a seat at an ecclesiastical synod, and admitted to the degree of doctor in philosophy. Upon this narrative I shall only observe that many of the Jews, whose names are immortalized in scripture, were, in faith, in godliness, and all that is exemplary, so many Barabiers.

"Do not the best of men frequently feel disorder in their affections? Do not they often complain, when I am doing good, evil is present with me?" "I believe not." What a proof is here! How well suited to its office: which is to controvert the current, and over rule the evidence of ancient and modern events. But why don't you believe what *Aspasio* supposes? Is your disbelief grounded on fact? Are you acquainted with any people, who feel no disorder in their affections? Who always do good in the completest manner? and never have evil present with them? If so, what are their names? where do they live? we would go many miles to see them. You have no aversion to the mention of names, when censure is the motive, and public disgrace the effect, why should you be so reluctant, when honor and distinguished respect would be the consequence?

Do they say, we groan, being burdened with the workings of inbred corruption? "Thus is not the meaning of the text. The whole context shews the cause of that groaning was their longing to be with CHRIST." You need not on this occasion rummage the context, or take a journey to find what is at your door. The sentence itself shews, as plainly as words can shew, the cause of their groaning. We groan, it is not said because we long to be with CHRIST. This might be a truth; but this is not the cause assigned, "We groan because we are burdened."—Burdened with what? *Aspasio* answers with a body of sin and death. This was the load that encumbered them, oppressed them, and made them sigh ardently for deliverance. Does not this signify all the infirmities and disorders of the present mortal state? Among which the sad effects of inbred corruption, are none of the least. These gave those

unanimous, but pious souls, more uneasiness than all other kinds of affliction, whatever.

The cure of sin will be perfected in heaven. "Nay," says in paradise. ² *As Asia* knows no inference between paradise and heaven; Paradise is the kingdom where CHRIST reigns; and is not this heaven? Paradise is the region where the tree of life grows; and is not this heaven? Heaven denotes the place, paradise describes its nature, a place of consummate bliss and absolute perfection, where is the fulness of joy and pleasure for evermore.—However, if it can be proved, that they are different abodes, and imply different states†; then *Asasia* would be understood to say, the cure of sin completed in paradise; or as soon as the believer drops his veil, and enters into the invisible world.

This (a perfect conformity to GOD) is a noble prerogative of our future vision. "Nay," says Mr. Wesley.—"Though *St. John* will think, but settled and ascertained this point beyond all contradiction—we shall be like him, for we shall see him, as he is.—"We shall," which imports, that at present we are not perfectly like him—"for," which denotes the efficient cause of this advancement and felicity, this complete transformation into the divine image—"we shall see him," no longer through a glass, but face to face. We shall receive the clearest manifestation of his ineffable holiness and glory, which will have

* "We groan, being burdened, with all this our spiritual infirmities, and with the working of our corruption." This is his interpretation. We groan, being burdened with our infirmities and temptations, to do as we will. This is Mr. Wesley's interpretation in his expository notes on the new testament. Yet here he denies what there he affirms. It is, said, I think of himself, but not a will, and every man. Mr. Wesley goes a step further. His mind is against him if so, as he will every body else.

† St. Paul, I am aware, speaks of heaven and souls of Paradise, 2 Cor. xii. 2, &c. So does David the king, when he says, "The gates of heaven are open to me." But as the same thing, though variously expressed, is intended by the prophet, I think we may not unreasonably understand the apostle in the same manner. If they had been different abodes, it is obvious he would have said, "I shall see him, and thus the third heaven." Otherwise he tells the story of his journey, for he first mentions his arrival at the third heaven, and then at Paradise, Gal. i. 12, &c. as he says to Mr. Wesley; it is he who was led into the precinct, and then introduced to the saints.

just the same effect upon our souls as the imprieted seal has upon the melting wax.

"It would then come too late. If sin remains in us till the day of judgment, it will remain in us for ever."—You suppose, that the beautiful vision is not enjoyed, till the day of judgment. But in this you seem to err, not knowing the scripture. I have a desire, says the apostle, to be dissolved—and what is the consequence, the immediate consequence of dissolution? To be with **CHRIST**; in his presence; before his throne; and is not this the beautiful vision? Willing (says the same inspired writer) to be absent from the body, and present with the **LORD**.—Here is no hint of any intermediate state, but the very moment, in which the saints depart from their bodies, they are present with the **LORD**; and if with the **LORD**, then is the highest heavens; then at the fountain head of felicity; then amidst the beautiful vision.—To heaven Elijah was conveyed in his fiery chariot; and into heaven the first martyr was received by his compassionate **SAVIOUR**—Neither of them waited in some intervening mansion, as a kind of lobby to the heaven of heavens. This is the Popish notion, and very closely connected with the chimera of purgatory; so closely connected, that if you take away the former, the latter drops into nothing—I am sorry, your opinions, Sir, are so much like the errors of the man of sin.

Our present blessedness does not consist in being free from sin. "I really think it does." Spoke like Mr. Wesley. "I think," is still the *argumentum palmarium*. "I think," is the heavy artillery, which is to demolish brigades at a blow, only here it is strengthened and enforced by that emphatical word "really."—But if our present blessedness does really consist in being free from sin, where are your blessed persons? We may truly say,

Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto. VIRG.

No; this can hardly be said, Virgil's description is too full, instead of seeing a very few, here and there one, popping up their heads, in the great and wide ocean of the

world; we are not able to find so much as an individual; view us one, only one of these angels in flesh and blood, and it sufficeth us. Whereas, if you persist in maintaining your *self-perfection*, yet cannot produce a single instance to exemplify your notion, will you not give too just a handle for that sarcastic reflection, used on another occasion?

With witnesses many this cause did abound,
With some that were hang'd, and some that were drown'd;
And some that were lost, and some never found.

These are Aspasio's words—"If (our present imperfection reminds us of a most important truth, that our present blessedness consists, not in being free from all sin, but in having no sin imputed to us." He took particular care to guard his meaning from misconstruction, by adding the word *all*: let this word, because it is little of stature, should be overlooked, he printed in *italics*. But all this precaution is thrown away upon Mr. Wesley. He takes no notice of this same little word; nay, he entirely snatches it out of his quotation; as though he should say, "where is the harm of clapping under the hatches such a punk, and putting out most nosy? I would have, if I knew, I shall ere long turn adrift more plump and portly words than that."

Aspasio also took care to confirm his sentiments by a reference to scripture, he supported himself by the authority of king David.—Mr. Wesley having a little while ago laboured to depreciate, now ventures to contradict the royal Psalmist. Blessed, (says the Psalmist) is the man—who is free from sin? who is perfectly sanctified? This is not the doctrine, which the sweet singer of Israel taught, but blessed is he, whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Deeply impressed, and quite charmed, with the contemplation of this most substantial happiness, the sacred writer proclaims it; repeats it; yes, a third time he celebrates it; crying out with exultation, *Blessed is the man*

unto whom the LORD imputeth no iniquity *; (Neither that iniquity which was formerly committed, nor that which still defiles †.) Blessed indeed ! May I live under a firm persuasion of my own particular interest, in this unspeakable privilege ! May I find it made good to my soul, at the universal judgment ! Then let others take the kingdoms of this world, and all the glory of them.—And as for Aspasio, he may reckon his credit safe, and his opinion fully authorized, while he espouses the doctrine, and uses the very words of the unerring SPIRIT.

“ If we are not free from sin, we are not christian believers.”—What an assertion is here ! *Assertion*, for I dare not call it a *truth*.—If it was, who then could be saved ? Not one of a thousand ; not two of a million ; no, nor one Mr John Wesley himself, since out of his mouth he stands condemned. He makes this acknowledgement, concerning himself and his followers, “ We know by melancholy experience what it is to neglect works of righteousness.”—To corroborate his confession, he adds, “ We know and feel by melancholy experience, what it is to swerve from our first love. We feel by experience”—He is willing to run the hazard of tautology, rather than any should suspect the sincerity and truth of his protestation.—And can you after such a confession, after such a protestation, pretend to be free from sin ? Is all this, which you know of yourself, and feel by experience, consistent with a sinless state ? Just as much as a lethargy is consistent with the vigour of health, or a shameful flight with a glorious victory. See, Sir, how you are entangled in your own net. Now, without being chased with an enemy, you run yourself aground. Nor will all your dexterity, so long as you avow such palpable inconsistencies, be able to set you clear.

You attempt to confirm your opinion by the Apostle's declaration ; *Being made free from sin*.—But he add you

* Psal. cxviii. 1, 2, Should any objection arise from the text *Sanctus, absque omni* &c. it is to be understood and interpreted, in the manner Aspasio. Vol. i. pag. 205, 206.

mean different things by the same words—he means being freed from the domination of sin.—This is agreeable to his own explanation, and shall not lord it over you.—It may assault you; it may harass you; it may gain some advantage over you; but it shall not obtain a final victory, nor play the tyrant over you. To the expedience and necessity of this freedom, if ever we would approve ourselves disciples of **CHRIST**, or christians indeed, I readily subscribe.—Whereas, you mean being free from the very remainder of sin. “Having a purity (in your own explanation) free from all mixture of its contrary, and a resignation excluding every degree of self-will.” Against the existence, or the possibility of this freedom, so long as we sojourn in a body of flesh, I enter my protest.

If we were perfect in piety, **CHRIST**’s priestly office would be superseded. “No, we should still need his spirit, and consequently his intercession.” But were we perfect, we should receive the spirit without an intercessor.—An intercessor implies an alienation between the two parties; or something which, without the intervention of a third person, would create alienation.—The priestly office, whether of atoning, or of interceding, is founded on a state of guilt, to this it bears an essential and invariable relation.—Does **CHRIST** exercise his priestly office in behalf of angels? No, because they excel in strength, and are perfect in holiness.—Will **CHRIST** exercise his priestly office, when all his saints are received into glory? No, because then there will be an absolute consummation both in body and soul, both in righteousness and happiness, and the mediatorial kingdom be delivered up to the **FATHER**.—Did **CHRIST** exercise his priestly office before Adam fell? No, because sin had no existence then, and then the language was, let man be blessed, not, deliver him from going down into the pit.

The objections laid to my charge in this paragraph, and the whole side of the leaf proceed upon your favourite notion; perfection of holiness, even while we continue in houses of clay. As I rest upon your foundation to be a mere delusion, I must of course conclude, all that you build

upon it to be chimerical and delusory ; therefore, till you prove your supposition, I have no reason to concern myself with any of your consequences deduced from it, or with any of your allegations relating to it. On one clause, however, let me bestow a slight animadversion.

Aspasio says, a sense of remaining inbred corruption will reconcile us to death ; Mr. Wesley replies, " In deed it will not : not will any thing do this like perfect love."—Here I think you have mistaken the mark. Nothing can reconcile us to death but that which takes away its sting ; and this is done only by the atonement of CHRIST. Nothing can reconcile us to death but that which delivers us from its terror, and this is effected only by the sacrifice of our great HIGH PRIEST, which has converted the king of terrors into a messenger of peace ; nothing can reconcile us to death, but that which makes it desirable to depart, and gain to die ; and this is owing, wholly owing to him who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

Old Simeon found, that nothing could reconcile him to death, so much as a believing view of the LORD'S CHRIST, seeing GOD made flesh ; seeing him as his own SAVIOUR, he was enabled not only to acquiesce in the summons, but to welcome it as a deliverance—He was enabled to say with composure and complacency, *LORD, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace*—Not because I am weary of this imperfect state ; not because I am perfect in divine love ; but because *mine eyes have seen thy salvation*. Though you may not like to imitate a Jew, I most heartily wish for myself ; let me die the death of this most venerable Hebrew, and let my latter end be like his.

If you still persist in your opinion, that nothing can reconcile you to dissolution like the imagined perfection of your love, not by the blood which the saints overcame ; not the righteousness, by which they reign in life ; nor the grace and power, which have swallowed up death in victory ; I must then caution you to take heed lest you cross, or attempt to cross the river, in the boat of vain confidence. You have abridged, it I mistake not, the *Pilgrim's Progress*, therefore can be at no loss to understand my meaning.

One clause, I said—but I correct myself—there is another, so very extraordinary, that you might justly charge me with wanton impudence, if I should pass it over without notice. These are the words—"if we were perfect in piety (St. John's word is, perfect in love) we should still be encompassed with infirmities, and liable to mistakes from which words or actions might follow, even though the heart was all love, which were not exactly right."

This is strange! wondrous strange indeed! perfect, yet "encompassed with infirmities!" perfect, "yet doing actions, and speaking words not exactly right!" you are as singular in your *idea*, as you are strenuous for the doctrine of perfection—I know not any protestant writer that pretends to maintain the latter, yours, it only excepts I; and as to the former, I think it could never enter into the head of any thing living, but Mr. Wesley's only. Perfect, "yet encompassed with infirmities," is just as sound divinity, as true, yet addicted to lying, is sound morality.

This is not the worst property of your notion of perfection, that it is absurd and self-contradictory. A sentiment may be *absurd*, yet not very *pernicious*. But this is an error of the most malignant kind, this was at the bottom of the Pharisees' pride, and spinned them on to seek justification by the works of the law; they knew full well, that their obedience was not complete, it did not come up to their sacred and exalted standard, but they had learnt to soften and extenuate their disobedience, into matters "not exactly right."—This is the cause, why people, professing christianity, see no form or comeliness, as in *CHILDS*, so as to desire him, with desires that cannot be uttered; 'tis true they are not perfect, they often offend,—but then the offences are only human *infirmities*; words and actions "not exactly right." With this, which is indeed "the siren song," they lull their souls into an insensibility of their ruined state, and a disregard of the all-sufficient REDEEMER.

• *Curse* (says the law) *to every one that continueth not in all things, whether they be great or small. And will you regard that, as a mere infirmity, and consistent with perfec-*

tion, on which the divine law denounces a curse? Which the divine law threatens with all misery here, and with everlasting vengeance hereafter? The apostle would probably chastise the author, or abettor of such a conceit, in the following manner; "wilt thou know, O vain man, that "what thou callest a matter "not exactly right," is is most horribly odious in the eye "of G^d's infinite purity; deserves eternal death in the estimate of his infinite justice, and could never have been pardoned but by the atoning death of his infinitely majestic son!"

"Encommissed with infinities, yet the heart all love! "words and actions not exactly right, yet the mind all perfection!" these are all paradoxes, which I never saw equalled, only in the writings of some high flown Papists. Mr. *Wesley's* words are not far from a translation, they are to a nicety the sense, of those very offensive passages, which I meet with in a couple of Zealots. *Andrianius*, interpreter of the council of *Trent*, writes thus; "Venialia "peccata" tam sunt minuta & levia, ut non adversentur "perfectioni charitatis, nec impediunt possunt perfectam "aut absolutam obedientiam."—*Lindenus*, another champion for the same bad cause, expresses himself in a more elegant, but in no less shocking a manner; "† *L-vicula* "vitiola lapsuum quotidianorum, aspergines & nævæ "sunt: quæ per se non maculant & contaminant, sed "quasi pulvisculo leviter aspergunt vitam christianom: ut "nihilominus tamen per se sint perfecta, & undique immaculata Renatorum opera in hac vita."—If Mr. *Wesley* pleases to consider these passages, I hope, he will be induced to alter his phrase, and rectify his notions.—If he pleases to translate these passages, his followers may have an op-

* Venial sins are so minute and trivial, that they do not oppose the perfection of our love, nor can they hinder our obedience from being absolutely perfect.

† The little trifling faults which are owing to per-daily slips or mistakes, are like specks, or almost imperceptible moths upon the sun; which of themselves do not stain or defile; but as it were, with small particles of fine dust, lightly sprinkle the christian life; so that nevertheless the works of the regenerate may be at themselves perfect, and in all respects immaculate, even in this life.

perpetrator of seeing, how nearly he approaches to some of the worst errors of *perjury*. And may hence be admonished, not to imbibe, without due examination, his doctrines; nor submit, with an implicit credulity to his dictates.

"The charges of the law are all answered."—At this sentence Mr. *Wesley* is highly offended. As the lion is said to lash himself into rage, so my objector stirs himself up into a graceful indignation; *stirs himself*, for there is nothing in the passage, or in the context, to awaken such a flame of zeal. If Mr. *Wesley* had understood *Aspasio*, according to the whole tenour of his discourse, there would have been no room for bringing *Cruel Zenobius* upon the carpet, nor for making that injurious comment, "*Then neither GOD nor man can claim any obedience to the Law.*" This is what *Aspasio* means: the claim of the law, as a covenant of works—the claims of the law, as being the condition of life and glory—the claims of the law, as requiring perfect obedience on pain of eternal death. These claims are all satisfied by our most blessed and gracious SURETY.—I not, they are still incumbent upon us, and upon every child of man. A burden this, which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear, which, heavier than the sands of the sea, would have sunk us all into the nethermost hell.—This doctrine, therefore, is not a "*antinomianism*" without a mask; but it is the doctrine of *righteousness without works**, and of justification *without the deeds of the law*†.

"Then neither GOD nor man can claim any obedience to the law." Yes, GOD Almighty may, and GOD Almighty does claim our obedience to the law; as a rule of life, he requires a conformity to his precepts, as to the image of himself; he demands a performance of his duties, as the means of bringing glory to his name, and paying submission to his authority. And *none* will be so readily disposed, none will be so effectually enabled, to obey the whole law; as those who see themselves made righteous by the obedi-

* Rom. iv. 5. † Rom. iii. 28.

ence of CHRIST, who are thereby delivered from that tremendous curse, denounced on all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

Aspasio thus exhorts his friend—let me desire you to imagine, rather may the blessed SPIRIT enable you to believe, that your sins are expiated, through the death of JESUS CHRIST: that a righteousness is given to you, by virtue of which you may have free and welcome access to GOD — ‘This is not scriptural language,’ says Mr. *Hewley*, therefore it cannot be sound doctrine, is his way of arguing. Harsh as enough I must own. But what follows is not quite so modest. “I would simply say,” and surely what *I* would say, must be *unreceptionably right*: this is the conclusion we are to make; other wise what you allege, is of no weight at all — ‘I would simply say, by him we “have access to the FATHER”’ This is beyond all objection, proper.—It is taken from the apostle, and it includes what *Aspasio* expresses.—The apostle’s language is the ingot of gold; *Aspasio*’s sentiment is a thread drawn, or a leaf beaten from it. Mr. *Hewley* thinks before I dismiss this topic, I would desire you to turn back a moment, and reconsider what you have affirmed—your sins are *expiated*, is not this scriptural language?—What else meaneth that expression of the apostle? “To make expiation for the sins of the “people.” A righteousness is given you, is not this the scriptural way of speaking? “They who receive the gift of “righteousness, shall reign in life”—By which you have “free access to GOD;” is not this both the dialect, and the doctrine of the HOLY GHOST? “We have access with “confidence (not through our punctual performance of any “conditions, but) through the faith of him;” by a fiducial reliance on our LORD’s most precious obedience, blood, and merit.

“I have seen such terrible effects of this unscriptural “way of speaking.”—Here I fancy you slip into a little mistake, you forgot the distinction between the use, and the abuse of a doctrine, a distinction which you can easily

make on other occasions; you have doubtless seen people who use the most scrupulous care, if speaking, yet act unscrupulously to their listeners: what reflection does it make in your mind, and what inference do you draw upon observing such an inconsistency? You said, perhaps, "their voice is Jacob's voice; but their hands are the hands of Esau—Hence it appears, that they are hypocrites—they pretend one thing, and are really a other."—Make the same reflection, and draw the same inference, when you hear people talking of *imputed righteousness*, yet see them losing the reins to ungodliness, then you will be consistent with yourself, and with truth, ascribing the terrible effects, not to the wholesome doctrine, but to the vitiated mind.

Where sin abounded &c. Mr. Wesley rejects *Asquith's* interpretation of this text, and offers one of his own, one, which he had given us a little while ago; and now serves a second time without any considerable variation at our table.—I shall only refer the reader to page 144, where he will find this text considered, and Mr. Wesley's exposition canvassed.

In this and the two following paragraphs you find fault with the phrase *imputed*; yet you say, "concerning the thing there is no question." You would discard that particular form of expression; yet you add, "As to the doctrine we are agreed." Even according to your own confession, all these your objections are a mere strife of words. Surely such a man as Mr. Wesley should know how to make a better use of pen, ink, and paper, than to litigate about letters and syllables.—If I thought myself contending only about the more precisely proper form of expressing the same thing, I should be ashamed of my employ, and would this instant lay down my pen; whereas I apprehend that we are not agreed as to doctrine, that there is a material and very wide difference between us.—My opinion, or rather, my faith is, that our LORD's obedience to the moral law in perfect submission to its authority, and in exact conformity to his precepts; his performance of all holy duties, and his exercise of all heavenly graces,

that all this is a most essential and distinguished part of his merit, that this is of higher dignity and greater value than the whole world, and all the righteousness in it—that the divine law is hereby more signally honored, than it could have been honored by the uninterrupted obedience of *Adam* and all his posterity—that GOD's justice, holiness, truth, receive greater glory from these unparalleled acts of duty, than from all the services of angels and men in their several wonderful orders; that this *active* righteousness, together with his most meritorious *sufferings*, are the ground and cause of my acceptance with GOD, are the very thing which procures and effects my justification, making me not barely acquitted from guilt, but truly righteous, *yea*, perfectly righteous, and that before the GOD of infinite penetration and purity.—This is a view of the doctrine, incomparably magnificent and inexpressibly comfortable. If you agree with your friend in all these particulars, speak and write conformably to such agreement, then you will never again hear from him in this manner, neither will he receive any more such favours from you as the letter now under consideration, then we shall be perfectly joined to, ther “ in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

Alas! this union, I fear, is not so easily to be effected—Mr. *Wesley* still insists, and still urges, “ the authority of “ our church (which *Aspasio* pleads) and of those eminent “ divines (whose testimony *Aspasio* alleges) does not touch “ those particular forms of expression.” Justification through imputed righteousness, or being made righteous through the obedience of CHRIST, I suppose are the forms of expression intended. These, it seems, none of the quotations confirm, establish, no, nor touch, in Mr. *Wesley's* opinion at least, but I am inclined to hope, that the generality of readers will be of a different persuasion, and allow that the quotations and the expressions touch and resemble one another, as much as the wings of the Cherubim in the ancient sanctuary *.

* Both the Cherubims were of one measure, and one size and their wings touched one another in the midst of the temple, 1 Kings vi. 26, 27

"Does not touch?" No: not yet? Then we must have recourse to some other authority, and such a one I have at hand as you would hardly venture, or even wish to gainsay, I mean the authority of *John Wesley, M. A.* who declares in his exposition to the new testament—"this is fully consistent with our being justified by the imputation of the righteousness of CHRIST." Now I shall only remonstrate of the apostle: "If thou thyself usest this phrase, why wouldest thou compel others to lay it aside? Or, why art thou displeased with others for a practice which thou allowest in thyself?"

Surely you will not say, *imputation* of righteousness is quite a different thing from *imputed* righteousness. —Does not the former evidently include the latter? Can there be a proclamation of pardon, without a pardon proclaimed? Can there be the purchase of an estate, without an estate purchased? Or the imputation of righteousness, without a righteousness imputed? If others should affect such subtle and self-deluding evasions, Mr. Wesley cannot, Mr. Wesley must not, he has precluded himself, nay, he has, with his own mouth, given a verdict against himself. Is it not recorded in those lines subjoined to your character of a Methodist?

Let faith and love combine
To guard your valiant breast,
The plate be righteousness divine,
Imputed and imprest.

This *imputed* righteousness was once a delightful theme; your song in the house of your pilgrimage. What is it now a burthensome stone, which you would fain shake off, from yourself and others? Are you become rich in yourself, and increased with goods of your own acquiring? We know full well for what reason the phrase and the doctrine are rejected, exploded, and reproached by the *Romish* superstition, because they display in the brightest light the beauty of FREE GRACE. They hold the door against all kind of human merit, they cut off every, the most distant pretensions for glorying in man; and refer all the honor of salvation to

JESUS CHRIST alone. A limit justification through the imputed righteousness of **CHRIST**, and the grand outwork, or the main pillar of *Pomery*, falls to the ground; while a solid foundation is laid for that triumph and gratitude, expressed in the inspired hymn, *let us be glad and rejoice exceedingly, but give the honor (all the honor) to HIM* *.

The righteousness of **GOD**, signifies the righteousness which **GOD** Man wrought out. "No;" says *Mr. Wesley*. Your reason, Sir, for this negative? A child may deny; A man of judgment will disprove.—Does not *Mr. Wesley* disprove, when he adds? "It signifies **GOD's** method of justifying sinners."—Just as forcibly as the *J. or* disproved the Messiahship of **JESUS** of *Nazareth*, when they cried; "Thou the **MESSIAH**! no; thou art a *Samaritan* and hast a devil." What they alledge^d, wanted a proof altogether as much, as what they denied.—What *Mr. Wesley* here alledge^s is a thread bare objection, already considered and already confuted. Yet, since it relates to a point of the utmost moment, and that which is the main hinge of our controversy, I shall not be deemed officious, if, as the shot has been once again discharged, I once again lift up my shield against it.

"The righteousness of **GOD**, signifies **GOD's** method of justifying sinners." We have already shewn, how low an interpretation this is; how insipid in itself, and incompatible with the current language of scripture: on the other hand, how sublime and consolatory, is the sense which *Aspasia* gives! a righteousness, which **GOD HIMSELF** has provided without any co-operation from his creatures—the righteousness of that most exalted, yet most condescending **SAVIOUR**, who is **GOD** and man in one **CHRIST**, a righteousness, dignified with all the perfections of the **GODHEAD**, therefore, worthy to be the comfort, the joy, the never ceasing boast of his people; and sufficient, infinitely sufficient, to save even the most vile, the most base, the most desperately ruined sinners.

This is a righteousness, as much superior to all human attainments, to all angelic accomplishments, as the heaven of heavens is higher than a clod of the vales.—This is a righteousness which could never have entered into the heart of man or angel to contrive, but it will be the cause of their admiration, and the subject of their wonder to endless ages—this sense fully accounts for those rapturous expressions of the prophet, when speaking of the all surpassing gift, he thus addresses his fellow sinners; *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy king cometh unto thee—he is righteous, and having salvation.* He is completely righteous in his nature, has fulfilled all righteousness in his life and death, and has thereby obtained for thee, a full pardon, a finished salvation, a sure title to eternal glory.—This accounts for those more rapturous expressions of the sacred writers, when, in the fervour of their gratitude, they call upon the whole creation, to celebrate the goodness of the incarnate JEHOVAH. *Sing, O ye heavens; for the LORD hath done it, shout, ye towers of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains; O forest and every tree therein, for the LORD hath (in his own person, by his own obedience and sufferings) redeemed Jacob, and glorified (not human abilities, not human works, but) himself, and his own righteousness, in the restoration of Israel.**

In short, this is a righteousness, which exalts GOD's justice: which magnifies the law; displays all his awful and amiable attributes in their fullest lustre.—To contrive it, was unsearchable wisdom, to bestow it, is invaluable treasure.—It answers in the completest manner, all the grand and gracious purposes both of GOD's glory and of man's salvation. True gospel this! glad tidings indeed! an expedient for our recovery, greater than our hearts could wish. We may truly say, while meditating on this gift of consummate righteousness; *where sin has abounded, grace has much more abounded.* The bricks are fallen down, but the most glorious repairer of our breaches has built with hewn stone.

* Isa. xlv. 1.

Well might the apostle, having thus supremely excellent righteousness in his view, look down with the most sovereign contempt upon every other (cause of) confidence; upon every other object of trust; and reckon them *drift* and *dung* — Well might he declare, that he would never be ashamed of the gospel, in which is this transcendentally noble righteousness, in all its magnificence, riches and glory.

Do you think me rather too warm upon the subject? Let me once again remit you to St. *Chrysostom*, read his exposition of that charming sentence, *the righteousness of GOD*, &c. This venerable father of the church speaks the thing as it is. He does not mingle our wine with water, but gives us the genuine truth, and triumphs because of the truth.

The doctrine of an imputed righteousness seems to have been typically taught, by the remarkable manner of clothing our first parents. All they could do for their own recovery, was like the patched and beggarly mantle of fig-leaves; this they relinquished, and GOD himself furnishes them with apparel; animals are slain, not for food, but sacrifice; and the naked criminals are arrayed with the skins of those slaughtered beasts—the *victims* figured the expiation, made by CHRIST's death, the *clothing* typified the imputation of his righteousness. "That does not appear," cries Mr. *Wesley*. *Aspasio* has produced an authority from the famous *Milton*. I could reinforce it by another from the elegant *Witsius*. If you are not satisfied with either, or both these testimonies, I will give you a reason for the sentiment—the victims most properly shadowed forth the expiation of guilt, by the Redeemer's blood; because it is the peculiar end of sacrifice, to make atonement for sins; the clothing most pertinently denoted the Saviour's righteousness, which is described, both by the prophet and the apostle under this very image—he *hath covered with the robe of righteousness*, says the prophet *Isaiah*. *The fine linen which arrays the bride of the lamb, is the perfect righteousness of the saints**, says the beloved disciple. It is like a

royal vesture, or a rich suit of apparel, *upon all them that believe*, adds the apostle *Paul*. The impartial reader, I promise myself, will allow these passages, if not to be absolutely decisive, yet to have somewhat more weight, than that atom in your scale, "this does not appear." As for sanctification, this may very reasonably rank among the effects of being cleansed by the blood, and adorned with the righteousness of CHRIST. These blessings produce peace of conscience, and love of GOD. Just as common clothing produces warmth, and promotes health,—And what is love of GOD, but holiness of heart in the seed, and holiness of life in the fruit?

As this (the nature of true holiness) is a matter of the last importance, is a point, on which multitudes, I fear, are mistaken, I will leave it upper most in your thoughts, in the reader's, and in those of, Rev. Sir, your, &c.





LETTER X.

REV. SIR,

WE are now entering upon a new province. Our business will be chiefly of the *philological* kind. We shall treat principally of words. But as they are the words, which the HOLY GHOST teacheth, they are like the combs erected in yonder hive. Not empty syllable, made only for sound; but rich with divine sense, and full of the honey of the gospel, replete with the manna of heaven — May this pen be, to the reader, like *Jon thins root*; when, dipp'd in the delicious juice, it *enlighten'd* *his eyes*, refresh'd his spirits, and cheer'd his heart!

“Almost every text, you are pleas'd to affirm, quoted in this and the following letter, in support of that particular form of expression, (imputed righteousness) is distorted above measure from the plain, obvious meaning, which is pointed out by the context.” Let us examine these abused and distorted texts, in order to discover, from whence the miscarriage happened; how the violence was done whether by Mr. *Wesley's* pen, or by *Isaac's* tongue.

The first is from the book of *Job*. Which, as it is greatly venerable for its antiquity, and singularly to be regarded

for its importance, I shall beg leave to consider at large.—A sinner is described, lying under a dangerous sickness? and brought, by the force of his disease, to the brink of the grave; by the multitude of his sins, to the very borders of hell. In this deplorable condition, *If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one of a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness; then he is gracious unto him, and saith, deliver him from going down into the pit; I have found a ransom*.*

If there be with him a messenger of the living GOD; a faithful ambassador of CHRIST, who may administer spiritual assistance to the poor afflicted creature.—An interpreter who knows how to open the scriptures, and rightly to divide the word of truth. Who is a preacher of righteousness, and can properly apply the word of grace.—This is not every one's talent; nor within the compass of every man's abilities.—He is one of a thousand, to whom GOD hath given the tongue of the learned; enabling him to speak a word in season, and suit the condition of each respective parent.—To shew unto man his uprightness; that is, says Mr. Wesley, "to convince him of GOD's justice, in so punishing him."

But is this the instruction, which such a distressed sufferer wants? Is the word of reconciliation, which every true minister, in ancient times did preach, and in later times does preach? Or is there any need of a choice instructor—One skilled in the counsel of GOD, to teach what the common dictates of reason demonstrate? In this interpretation, I can neither discern the true critic, nor the clear reasoner, nor the sound divine.

Not the true critic. He would acknowledge, that the antecedent in this clause is not GOD, but man. To man therefore, if we regard grammatical propriety, the pronoun *he* must be referred. Not the clear reasoner; he would observe the emphasis of the word *then* †. Implying some

* Job xxxiii. 23, 24.

† 1. 2. r. 24.

discovery, or some conviction, in consequence of which, deliverance from death ensues; or with which it is connected. Can this be a discovery or a conviction of GOD's justice, in punishing him? No verily — Much less therefore can I discern the *sound Divine*. He knows, and affirms constantly, that is the consequence of the MESSIAH's righteousness alone. Which being imputed to the sinner, becomes, for the blessed purpose of justification unto life, *his* *.

So that A-pasio seems to have the import of language, and the scope of the context, both on his side. And I may venture to add, he has the consolatory genius of the gospel, yet more strongly pleading for his interpretation. It must yield both cold comfort, to tell a poor wretch, confined to the bed of languishing, and attended with apprehensions of eternal vengeance; but cold comfort must he yield, to tell such a one, that he has deserved all this misery, and is justly punished. Whereas, to inform him of a righteousness, sufficient to do away all his transgressions; sufficient to reconcile him, and render him acceptable, even to the punishing GOD; sufficient to obtain his deliverance very probably from death, most assuredly from hell; this is a reviving report indeed. This will make the bones, which sin and misery had broken, to rejoice.

Then, the sinner and the sufferer, attentive to this instruction, and applying this righteousness, is not to partake of pardon. GOD, the sovereign LORD of life and death, *is gracious unto him; and saith*, in the greatness of his strength, as well as in the multitude of his mercies, *deliver him from going down into the pit of corruption, as a pledge of his deliverance from the pit of perdition.* For I have found a ransom, satisfactory to my law, and to my justice.

* * The uprightness, says Mr. Caryl, chiefly intended here, is the righteousness of CHRIST, in and by which we are reconciled to and made one with God. We are not in, where we are uprightly as, till we see that something that must be fulfilled in the court of heaven, but only CHRIST our righteousness. In this regard we are messengers and interpreters of (CHRIST), to declare to men that they are not righteous. And that hence it is (as John speaks) that GOD is a rewarder of them that labour unto him."

I have received an atonement, in behalf of this once obnoxious, now reconciled transgressor.

He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness.—Thus you would render *holiness*. But have you not Hebrew Lexicon to inform you, that the word which signifies holiness, is different from the expression used by the Psalmist—Besides, have you not observed, that your interpretation would betray the Psalmist, into a pious tautology? He had, in the preceding verses, displayed the duties of practical godliness, and the graces of inherent holiness. The person he describes, possesses the latter, and practices the former. To say, therefore, he shall receive holiness, when he has it already, would suit David's correctness; however, it may suit Mr. Wesley's fancy, or Mr. Hays's design.—In this clause, the evangelical motto is joined upon another particular, which enters, as an essential part, into the character of a godly man, even *the righteousness which is of faith*. Denoted by the blessing, of a lion, and the gift of righteousness. Take away this, and the grace, mentioned in the circle of the psalm, is unaccountably shut. Unless we are furnished with this passport, the everlasting doors never lift up their leaves—it you exhibit this peculiarity, the description is very imperfect, and the picture extremely deficient. Whereas, this adds the necessary to lean, and gives true perfection to both.

An opposer of our LORD's imputed righteousness, who had more discretion or more subtlety than Mr. Wesley, would have argued in this manner. "The original word, I must confess, ought to be translated *righteousness*. This is undoubtedly the principal and leading signification of the term. But then the circumstances and the context oblige us to understand it, in the notion of mercy, or spotless holiness, or of any thing else, that serves our purpose."—This would be more modest and more plausible, though not more just and solid, than your confident assertion.

Suppose, we should admit this pretence, what does the critic gain thereby? Must he not have recourse to that noble and comfortable doctrine, for which we plead? Let the word be translated *mercy*, why is mercy seldom to succour?

Is it not on account of the righteousness of their SURETY? Let it be translated *goodness*. Wherefore is goodness exercised to rebellious men? Is it not because of the satisfaction, made by their crucified LORD? Render it whatever you please, provided it conveys the idea of favour vouchsafed, or of the benefits conferred, it must terminate, still terminate, in that grand central point, the incarnation, obedience, and death of IMMANUEL.

Sign shall be redeemed with judgment—But why is Sin to be redeemed after severe punishment? Has her punishment any influence or sway in the work of her redemption? Does the punishment of man pave the way for the salvation of GOD? Are sinners to wait for pardon and reconciliation, till they have been severely punished? This is very discouraging doctrine. And, blessed be GOD, it is absolutely without foundation. The gospel says; *to day, even to day, sinners, if ye will hear his voice, ye shall enter into rest*. You need not tarry, till you have been severely chastised; but this instant, believe in the LORD JESUS, and you shall be saved. The LORD JESUS has been wounded and bruised in your stead. He has received all the punishment, which you have deserved. Yea, as a ransom, he has paid double, as a victim, he has suffered *, for all your sins—Considering these things, I am still disposed to abide by *Aspasius's* plain and obvious interpretation. Not to go out of my way, in quest of the pricking briar and grieving thorn; when I meet with roses and lilies in the common road.

In the LORD I have righteousness. This will not satisfy our critic. It must be through the LORD.—What piddling criticism is this, even in case it was true, and answered some specious end! but it is by no means true. To have righteousness in the LORD, is abundantly more expressive of glorious grace, than barely to have righteousness through the LORD. *Mordecai* had riches and honors, through *Ahasuerus*, and his royal favour; *Esther* had riches and honors, in *Ahasuerus*, as her royal husband. He by

being a courtier, *she* by being a consort, to the most magnificent monarch in the world.

What righteousness shall give us peace at the last day, inherit or imputed? In this question *Asinius* has replied, in a very explicit manner, by presenting us with a pertinent extract from *Bishop Hall*, and by commenting upon a most important prophecy of *Isaiah*. In both which, all human righteousness is set aside, and our peace is derived entirely from the glorious *SHELOH* *. From him, who made peace by the blood of his cross, and whose name is **THE PRINCE OF PEACE**. Having this heavenly blessing, and the right of conferring it, as the peculiar privilege, or unshared prerogative of his crown.

Mr. *Wesley* is pleased to deny this doctrine, and to associate with the Papists †, in ascribing our peace (and if our peace, then our salvation) “partly to inherit, partly, to imputed righteousness.”—But does our church do so? Hear her own words. We do not presume to come to this thy table, O merciful LORD, trusting in our own righteousness; much less then will she dare to approach his judgment seat, trusting in any such thing.—Does the apostle *Paul* do so? Here his own protestation. *That I may be found in CHRIST, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law; which consists of my personal obedience, and inherent holiness.* But having this, as the source of my peace, and the strength of my salvation, *the righteousness which is of GOD by faith*; even that inconceivably precious righteousness, which GOD my SAVIOUR wrought, and which a sinner by faith receives.—Did Mr. *Wesley* himself always do so? Let those lines bear witness, of which neither the Poet, nor the divine, need be ashamed.

My righteous servant and my SON
 Shall each believe in sinners here,
 And all who stoop to abjure their own,
 Shall in his righteousness appear.

* Gen. xlix. 10.

† 1 John iv. 17

Will that righteousness give you peace, which you as-
 sure? Or, is it *thus*, is it prudent, is it consistent, to trust
 in a righteousness, which you are *sure* to shake? That
 which you assure (a stronger word could not be used) you
 consider, not *sure*, as displeasing, but a *sure*ly abominable.
 Whereas, that which gives you peace at the awful tribunal
 must not only be excellent, but incomparably excellent and
 valuable — See, my friend, how *their own mouth condemneth*
them and not I: yea, *their own lips testify against them* *.
 O! that you may return to your first venture, and to
 your first love †! And no longer expose yourself and your
 doctrine, to be a bye word among the people. If you per-
 sist in such palpable inconsistencies, who can forbear telling
 us that taunting proverb, “a double-minded man is unsta-
 ble in all his ways.”

But still. A passage from St. John is introduced, to
 support this notion — “CHRIST died for us, and lives in
 us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment.” —
 That CHRIST died for us, and lives in us, I readily ac-
 knowledge. But where do you find any of the Apostles,
 from these premises, drawing your conclusion? St. John,
 whom you quote has no such logic. His inference is de-
 duced from a very different topic. You give us a fragment
 of the Apostle’s words, why don’t you exhibit the golden
 bowl complete? We shall then quickly perceive, that it
 contains a more sweet and salutary draught, than you have
 provided for our refreshment.

*Herein our love is made perfect, that we may have bold-
 ness in the day of judgment ‡.* As you are fond of criticism.

* Job xx. 3.

† That Mr. Wesley may not be ashamed to retract a mistaken leniency, I will break
 the ice, and follow him. If it is his to retract error, as it is his to tell the truth,
 I do very warmly thank him to myself with a copy of his views, which I formerly
 addressed to the memory of a generous benefactor, I beg leave to publish them.

One wants relief’d by the indulgent *deity*,
 Shall give thee courage at the dreadful day;
 And Lud the crown, thou shalt not ever wear,

ing upon the original scriptures, here you might have done it justly and honourably. Here you might have altered and reformed our translation; while every capable judge would have owned your service, to be seasonable and important. GOD's love, is celebrated with inimitable energy and beauty in the preceding verse; GOD's love towards us is herein made perfect; this is its grand and crowning effect, that we should have, not a bare hope, but an unappalled boldness at the day of judgment.

As though he had said, GOD, having reconciled us to himself, by the blood of his SON—having renewed us after his own image, by his blessed SPIRIT, testifying of CHRIST in our hearts—having carried us through all the dangers of life, and raised our bodies from the dust of death—he crowns and consummates all these most indulgent acts of his grace, by giving us an undaunted and triumphant confidence at the day of universal audit—According to this interpretation, your own text is against your opinion, and refers this joyful assurance, not to our love of GOD, but to his love of us, not to inherent righteousness, but to free grace †.

Asinus thus translates St. Peter's words: *Who have obtained the precious faith in the righteousness of our GOD and our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST* ‡. Mr. Wesley gives us to understand, that this translation is wrong. It should be *faith through*—and not *through the righteousness*, but *through the mercy of our GOD and SAVIOUR*.

Here, I cannot but observe; you abandon your favourite commentator *Benignus*; of whose merit and excellence you speak so highly and so justly. He says, in his notes upon the place, the righteousness of GOD our SAVIOUR, is the righteousness of CHRIST; which faith apprehends, and which is opposed to a man's own righteousness.—

† Should it be said, in case you thus interpret the first part of the text, how will it consist with what it flows? perfectly well.—And none need wonder, that we shall appear with such boldness at his coming; since they cannot but observe, that as he is, so are we in the world. We are actuated by his SPIRIT; we resemble him in all our conversations; and hence it is evident, that we are one with him.

What is more surprising, you depart from your own comment: nay, you expressly contradict your own comment. To edify the readers of your exposition, you inform and assure them, that this phrase signifies "both active and passive righteousness" of CHRIST. you add, "It is this, alone, by which the justice of GOD is satisfied." If then Mr. Wesley would reconcile, what he writes in his expository notes with what he writes in his arid adversary's on Asaph, he must maintain, that by the mercy of GOD alone, His justice is satisfied.

I will not exclaim, on this occasion, as you have too frequently and not very getteth done, in your letter to Mr. Law, "Exquisite Nonsense &c." But this I may venture to say, contradictory, didst thou ever know, so trusty a friend, or so faithful a devotee? Many people are ready enough to contradict others. But it seems all one to this gentleman, whether it be another or himself, so that he may but contradict.

Permit me, for a moment, seriously to expostulate the case. Why should you be so averse to the righteousness of our GOD and SAVIOUR? Why should you ransack all the stores of your learning and knowledge, nay, descend to unwarrantable criticisms, and quite unworthy your superior abilities, in order to exclude this most glorious truth from the bible; in order to exterminate this most precious privilege from the church? Attempt, if you think proper, to pluck the sun from the firmament, to hide the light from our eyes, and withdraw the air from our lungs. But do not attempt to rob us of what is far more valuable than all the blessings, by depriving us of this inestimable treasure, the righteousness of CHRIST.—When, being a righteousness

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+ Mr. Wesley, in the abridgment of his letter to Dr. Law, intended in the Preface to be understood "Notum, has expressed that it is the rather evident to his experience, in his doing, he has done well. Since the communications and reproofs, even when they are deserved, can have no tendency to diminish the affection of the people to promote them. They are not the means of making men to be joyful in the law, but to be in the law. It is a judgment; not rather the law, but the wisdom of the people, and the means of the law."

immaculate, all-surpassing, divine, swallows up and annihilates our guilt; as the immense waves of the ocean, would swallow up and annihilate the drop of ink, that now hangs on the point of my pen.—Which, being a righteousness, immaculate, all-surpassing, divine, will present us before our GOD, and before his angels, without spot and blemish;—in robes, much more beautiful than the colours of that resplendent bow, which is bended on the skirts of yonder cloud.

Therein is revealed the righteousness of GOD—"GOD's method of justifying sinners." See this interpretation examined, and this objection answered before.

We establish the law, as we expect no salvation, without a perfect conformity to it†—namely, by CHRIST. "Is not this a mere quibble?" says Mr. Wesley—Quite the reverse. It is no low conceit, but an exceedingly serious and momentous truth. It is no *play upon the sound of words*, but expresses a doctrine of great solidity, and of the last importance. Tell me, ye that cavil at this method of establishing the law, by what other expedient you propose to effect it?—By your past conduct? That you must acknowledge, has been more or less a violation of the law.—By your future behaviour? Well, I will suppose, that, in some future period, you reach the very summit of perfection. Still the law will have much to complain, and will lay much to your charge. You have not magnified it by a holy nature. You have not presented it with the consummate righteousness of your whole heart, and your whole conversation. You have not begun, from the very moment of your existence, and persevered in this perfect conformity, to the last breath he drew. In this case, either the law must recede from its most righteous demands, and the immutable GOD must compromise matters with his creatures, or else you can never enter into life. Unless you renounce all such impotent attempts, and arrogant conceits; talk no

† The reader is desired to see Mr. Alford's own words, Vol. 1d. pag. 269, 270. These his terms are more fully explained; but the passage is inserted, on purpose to show us, as it stands in the place. Which does, I think, reach to charges both than the writer proposed.

more of "making it, in effect, a law," but betake yourself to CHRIST, and at the end, the law, for accomplishing that righteousness, which its precepts demand, but which the frailty of man cannot perform.

Thus we establish the law, as the consummate standard of righteousness: as the original condition of life; and as that most venerable system, with which, as well as with its divine author, there is no variableness or shadow of changing.—And does this method of securing the dignity of the law, hinder or discourage a dutiful observance of its commands? If not, your objection derived from that well-known text, *Without holiness no man shall see the LORD*, is

— — *Tantum libelle sine ictu.*

It this be the most rational, and the most sure way of producing the love of GOD, which is the very essence of true holiness, then your objection recoils, and falls upon the head of your own cause.—Can there be a more powerful, a more endearing motive to love the LORD my GOD, than a persuasion of his ineffable love to me, in giving his dear SON, so to fulfil, so to satisfy the law on my behalf, that I am thereby delivered from all my offences; and, vested with a perfect righteousness, and, on the foot of justice, as well as mercy, stand entitled to eternal life?

"Though I believe, that CHRIST hath lived and died for me, yet I would speak very tenderly and sparingly of the former."—How widely then does your practice differ from the apostle's? *We believe, and therefore have spoken*, confidently and incessantly, in season, and out of season. No, says Mr Wesley, "we believe, and therefore we speak tenderly and sparingly."—If you believe, that CHRIST has lived for you, and fulfilled all righteousness in your

* Rom x. 4. CHRISTUS, talis Brachius iustitiam & vitam, quem Lex ostendit, sed dare non potest. CHRIST is the end of the law. How? By bringing in that righteousness, and giving that life, which the law shew'd, and shews the want of, but not the gift of. we can enable us to acquire.

CHRISTUS talis St. Augustine, est legem finis interitum & perfectionem. The ceremonial law he has taken, and taken out of the way. The moral law he has fulfilled for us, and we in him. Inasmuch as, through faith in him, his obedience is accounted ours.

stead, surely you should give him the honor of this wonderful loving-kindness, and both preach, and talk, and sing of his goodness. It should be as a fire shut up in your bones; and you shall speak, that yourself may be refreshed, and your LORD may be glorified.

But you "fear dreadful consequences:" What? Where the divine holiness fears none? And the divine presence sees none? Are you then more deep-sighted, to discern these distant evils, than omniscience? Methinks, I would not have spoken thus, unless I had been wiser than the SPIRIT of inspiration—Do you not, by cheating, and avowing such apprehensions, find fault with the glorious gospel, in which this righteousness is revealed? Revel it, as its most eminent article, and most distinguishing peculiarity?—A doctrine taught, and a blessing granted, and both from heaven? Yet not to be displayed, inculcated, and insisted on! what a contemptible idea must this give of our holy religion, and of our holy revelation, to an inquiring infidel?

"I would never speak of them (the active and passive "righteousness of CHRIST) separately." This insinuates, what Aspasio disavows; and what you cannot hint, without apparent injustice to his sentiments.—"I would speak "of it (the former) as sparingly as do the scriptures." Here, you appeal to those writings, which must either condemn your conduct, or their own propriety. At your leisure consider the case, and you will find the dilemma unavoidable. In the mean time, be so candid as to read a short note, inserted in *Theron and Aspasio*, Vol. II. Page 391. Where you may see, that the scriptures are far from speaking sparingly on this point. It is the favourite and fundamental topic. It runs through them, as a golden woad through a warp of silver; or as the vital blood through the animal structure.—And whatever you, Sir, may be inclined to do, I hope, no lover of CHRIST will be persuaded to secrete this invaluable truth of the gospel. Shall such a truth skulk in a corner, or speak only in a whisper? No; let us proclaim it upon the house-tops; and wish, that the joyful sound may reach the very ends of the earth.

The gift of righteousness must signify a righteousness not their own.—*Apostle's* expression is, not originally their own. Originally he said, with a view of hinting, that, in some other sense, it was and is their own. Their own, by way of imputation, though not by way of operation. This word, in order to make the sentence appear absurd, Mr. Wesley drops. But whether such a practice be free from guile, or what the apostle calls *cunning craftiness*, let the impartial reader judge.

Apostle's interpretation of the phrase, authenticated by the language of scripture, Mr. Wesley sets aside; and introduces another, whose only recommendation to the public is, "I come from Mr. Wesley's pen"—Do you so? Then we will allow you all proper regard. But, because you come from Mr. Wesley's pen, must you therefore displace propriety, and supplant truth? Make an inspired writer argue incorrectly, nay, jar with himself? This is rather too much for you to assume, even though you came recommended by a greater name.

"The gift of righteousness or holiness which GOD gives to and works in them." Let us observe the apostle's aim, and the process of his reasoning—His aim is to illustrate the manner of our justification. For this purpose, he forms a contrast between *Adam's* transgression, and *CHRIST's* obedience. *Adam's* transgression, which he himself committed, ruins all that spring from him. This is the leading proposition. Now, if the sacred disputant knows to reason accurately, or to draw a conclusion justly, the conclusion must be to this effect; so likewise *CHRIST's* obedience, which he himself performed, recovers all who believe in him. Through *Adam's* disobedience, without the consideration of their own misdoings, the former are made sinners. Through *CHRIST's* obedience, without the consideration of their own good qualities, the latter are made righteous. Though I am far, very far from disesteeming the holiness wrought in us, yet what place has it here? In the article of justification it is utterly excluded. It has no share in the accomplishment of that great work; and every attentive reader will see, that it enters not into the Apostle's present

argumentation. Besides ; if the gift of righteousness signifies the holiness wrought in us, then we shall reign in life, by means of a personal, not of an imputed righteousness, by means of an imperfect, not of a complete obedience. — Then all the people of GOD will be justified, not by the obedience of ONE, but each by his own, severally and distinctly. Which is contrary, not only to a single, but to many express passages of this very chapter. I said, “ Every attentive reader will see.” — Some, perhaps, may say within themselves ; I was this spoken in Mr. Wesley’s manner ? The loose presumptive way of arguing which you blame in him ? To which it is answered ; I am far from resting my point upon this presumptive proof. It is not the pillar, which supports my cause ; but only a testoon, which adorns my pillar. However, was it accompanied with no proofs, satisfactory to others ; it must to Mr. Wesley, whom I suppose one of the attentive readers, have the force of demonstration. Hear his own word, in his comment on this very portion of scripture. “ As the sin of Adam, without the sins which we afterwards committed, brought us death ; so the righteousness of CHRIST, without the good work, which we afterwards perform, brings us life †.” — It is a righteousness, without the good works, which we afterwards perform ; therefore, it is a righteousness, not originally our own, but another’s. It is not that, which GOD works in us, but prior to it, and independent on it. If Aspasio had suborned an evidence, and put words into his mouth, he could not have devised a more direct and full confirmation of his doctrine, than this volunteer witness deposeth. I thank you, Sir, for giving me so valuable an explanation of the gift of righteousness, and its blessed effects. I thank you likewise, for furnishing Aspasio with so incontestable a vindication, against the objections of the author of *The Preservative*.

The obedience of ONE, so highly extolled by the apostle, is CHRIST’s actual performance of the whole law.

† Here Mr. Wesley speaks in perfect agreement with St. Cyprian.

This you deny. I wish you had favoured me with your reasons for this denial. But my wishes of this kind are constantly disappointed. However, I will follow our LORD's direction, and pray, *others*, even as I would they should do unto me. I will give you a reason for my own or *Asquith's* interpretation. — The apostle is speaking of *Adam's* actual breach of the law. If so, the proper antithesis must be *CHRIST's* actual performance of the law. — In the following verses he explains himself. — Let them be the comment on our text and the gift of righteousness means, *the righteousness of ONE; the obedience of ONE.* This righteousness we have in *JESUS CHRIST* our LORD; all other is inherent in ourselves. Justification by this righteousness, is alone consistent with free grace; justification by any other, is (inconsistent with it, is) subversive of it.

That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us. That is, by our representative, and in our nature. — "Amazing!" cries Mr. *Wealey*. But why amazing? Is not this the common import of the most common actions? Do not you and I make laws in and by our representatives in parliament? May not every debtor, when his surety has given full satisfaction to the creditor, say; I have satisfied, I have paid, in my bondsman?

To invalidate this interpretation, you alledge; that the apostle "is not speaking here of the *cause* of our justification, but the *fruits* of it." Among all the excellent things, which, in your studies and in your travels, you have learned; have you never learned, that, between saying and proving, there is a wide difference? Never did I meet with a person, who seemed so totally ignorant of this very obvious truth. — Well; we must take your word, without proof; but I hope, not without examination. "The apostle is speaking of the fruit" Is then the fulfilling of the law, the fruit of justification? This is the first time, I apprehend, that any such thing, was deliberately affirmed. It is the cause, the adequate, the immediate, and indeed the only proper, *cause* of justification. But the fruits are peace of conscience, and love of GOD; the spirit of adoption, and the hope of glory.

This sense, says *Aspinwall*, agrees with the tenor of the apostle's arguing. "Not here!" replies Mr. *Wesley*—Let us then consider the aim, and trace the progress, of the apostle's reasoning. He is clearing up and confirming that great privilege of the gospel. *There is no condemnation to them that are in JESUS CHRIST.* This, you will allow, is not the fruit of justification, but justification itself. As this wants no argument to confirm it, let us proceed in our attention to the sacred writer. There is no condemnation to those, who are true believers in JESUS CHRIST.—Who, in consequence of this belief, walk not after the flesh, but after the SPIRIT.

Perhaps, some man will say; How can this be? Since even true believers fall short. Nay, they offend; and therefore must be liable to the curse—For this reason, they are delivered from condemnation; because *the law of the SPIRIT of life in CHRIST JESUS*, that new dispensation, introduced in the room of the old law, promises the privilege of pardon, and the gift of the SPIRIT, in which things the true life and real happiness of mankind consist. Promises both freely, without any works, purely on account of the righteousness which is in CHRIST JESUS. And hereby, this new, gracious, blessed dispensation, *hath made me free from the law*; which convinced me of sin; condemned me for sin; and bound me over unto death.

These are glad tidings, doubtless. But are they not attended with two inconveniences? Does not this procedure deprive the law of its due honor, and screen the sinner from his deserved punishment?—By no means. *For that which was an absolute impossibility, on account of the strictness of the law, and the weakness of human nature, GOD, to whom nothing is impossible, has most wonderfully accomplished—By sending his own SON, in the likeness of sinful flesh, to live among sinners; to come under their obligations; and perform the obedience demanded from them. By sending him also to be a sacrifice for sin; to be charged with its guilt, and undergo its punishment. By this grand expedient, he has provided for the honor and perfect accomplishment of the law. He has also condemned and punished*

sia, with the utmost severity. And both these in the flesh ; in that very nature, which was guilty, disabled, and ruined.

Should you farther ask ? wherefore is all this ? To lay the surest foundation, or make the most complete provision for our justification. That the righteousness of the law, both its righteous sentence and its righteous precepts, whatever either of suffering or of obedience it required from transgressors, being fulfilled in CHRIST might be fulfilled in us. As it was all done in our name, and as he and we are one. One in civil estimation, for he is our representative. One in legal estimation, for he is our surety. One in social estimation, for he is our bridegroom. For which cause, his righteous acts are ours, and his atoning death is ours.

There was a time, when you embraced these sentiments. When you had such views of things. When such language came out of your mouth. Which even now stands upon record, under your own hand. See your "Principles of a Methodist." If you have forgotten them, permit me to remind you of them. "CHRIST, you say, is now the "righteousness of all them, that truly believe in him. He "for them paid the ransom by his death ; he for them fulfilled the law in his life. So that now, in him and by "him, every believer may be called a fulfiller of the law."—Since you pronounce my sense of the Apostle's words unnatural, I adopt, I espouse yours*. And so much the more readily, as it will puzzle sagacity itself, to discern a difference between them.

Strange ! That a man of ordinary discernment ; should offer to intrude upon the public, such a multitude of naked, unsupported, magisterial assertions ! Should ever be able to persuade himself, that a positive art will pass for a demon

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* Should Mr. Welley say, Though I used these words I never intended them as a comment on this passage.—If you so now, I imagine that I never intended to borrow from whom they are taken, did. At least they signified to me, as to a lawbreaker, a warning, a proof of their existence.

stration, or supply the place of argument ! If this be to demonstrate, if this be to confute, the idiot is as capable of both, as the philosopher.—May I not cry out, in your own strain ? O how deep an aversion to the imputed righteousness of CHRIST, does this Arminian scheme discover !—Since it will make a man gainsay, when he knows not why, or wherefore.

St. Paul declares, that the Gentiles who followed not after righteousness, had attained unto righteousness. Upon which Aspasio observes, that the righteousness, here mentioned, could not be any personal righteousness. To which Mr. Wesley replies, " It was." And to render this reply quite irresistible, a perfect thunderbolt in argumentation ; he adds, " Certainly it was."—How Sir ! Did they attain personal righteousness without seeking after it ? Are you becoming a Calvinist ? You that had rather be an Atheist ? Could the zealot of Geneva go greater lengths ? Aspasio will not deny, that these Gentiles were sanctified, as well as justified, but he will venture to affirm, that no degree of sanctification can make the persons righteous, who are once become sinners. CHRIST, like Elijah, first casts his mantle over them ; and then, like Elisha, they forsake all, and follow him.

The righteousness, which the Gentiles attained, could not be a personal righteousness. " Certainly it was." Then it was the righteousness of the law. Whereas, their righteousness consisted in believing, according to the Apostle's own explanation. With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.—Then it was the righteousness of man. Personal righteousness and implanted holiness pass, in the scriptures, under that denomination. Whereas, these Gentiles submitted themselves to the righteousness of GOD.—If, what these Gentiles attained, had been a personal righteousness, it would have been no stumbling-block to the Jews. Even they would have fallen in with such a system of religion, as should ascribe righteousness and salvation to their own duties and their own deeds.

You say, " It was implanted, as well as imputed."—Here then, you acknowledge an imputed righteousness. You yourself use the phrase. You affirm it to be, if not the

whole, part at least, of the apostle's doctrine. I wish, you had been of this mind, when you began your letter. Then you would not have conjured me, by all that is venerable and important, to discontinue an expression, which conveys—your own—the apostle's meaning—and the meaning of the HOLY GHOST.

You join imputed and implanted righteousness. So, in case this address to yourself should pass through the Printer's hand, would I join a handsome type and pertinent reasoning. Yet I apprehend, when you sit down to examine the essay, you will regard only the latter.—What you associate, you associate properly. The first is the trunk, the last is one of the branches, which spring from it. But the apostle seems, in the place before us, to be considering the first only. The last he reserves, for some future occasion.—He is speaking of the righteousness, by which we are saved; and that is solely the imputed righteousness of CHRIST.—He is speaking of the righteousness, which was an eye-sore and an offence to the self-conceited Jews; and this was only the imputed righteousness of CHRIST.—He is speaking of a righteousness, contradistinguished to that righteousness, which is described by *he that doeth these things*; and this can be nothing else, but the imputed righteousness of CHRIST.—Therefore, though love of GOD, and conformity to his image; though the pure heart, and the devout affection; are the inseparable concomitants, or rather the genuine produce, of imputed righteousness; yet here they come not under consideration. To force them into this passage, is to make them appear out of due season. Such an exposition, may bespeak a zealous officiousness, not a distinguishing judgment. Because, it contriveth the order of the apostle's plan; it defeats the design of his argument, if it does not introduce self-contradiction into his arguing.

This righteousness came upon the Gentiles, *as the former and latter rain upon the earth*. To them was fulfilled the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah; *let the skies pour down righteousness*. As the earth engendereth not the rain; has not the least influence, in forming, or the least agency, in procuring, the refreshing showers; but only receiveth them,

as the mere gift of providence; so the Gentiles had not the least influence in effecting, nor the least agency in procuring, this righteousness.—When the good news came into their territories, they were totally destitute of it; they were utterly unconcerned about it; they knew nothing at all concerning it. But seeing it revealed in the gospel; seeing it displayed, as the work of GOD, and hearing it offered, as the gift of GOD; they were not disobedient to the heavenly invitation. They believed the report; they accepted the blessing; and relied upon it, for life and salvation.—Then, *as the rain coming down and the snow from heaven, returneth not thither again but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth bud; that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater*: so, this inestimable truth, being admitted into the soul, CHRIST and his righteousness being received to dwell in the heart*; all the powers of intellectual nature, or what St. Paul calls *the inner man*, are exhilarated, quickened, and fructified. They bud as the rose, and blossom as the hly; they bring forth the fruits of inward love, of outward obedience, of universal goodness.

For instruction in righteousness, in the righteousness of CHRIST. “Was there ever such a comment before?” May I not answer, in your own words; was there ever such a method of confutation used before?—But you had; “The plain meaning is, *for training up in holiness of heart and of life*.” I wish, you had thought of introducing this interpretation, by the following short preface, “I take it for granted.” You would then have been sure of saying one truth.—But if this does not appear plain to me, you see it did not to *Aspasia*, methinks, you should lend me your spectacles, or favour me with your reasons.

He shall convince the world of righteousness—“That I am not a sinner, but innocent and holy.” How flat and jejune is this exposition! Nothing can be more so, to my taste.—“Innocent and holy!” Is this all the SPIRIT witnesses, concerning the most adorable and infinitely deserving

SON of GOD? Does this come up to the inconceivable dignity of His person, and the immensely glorious perfection of his work? Is this sufficient to comfort the conscience, smitten with a sense of most damnable guilt, and alarmed with the terrors of eternal vengeance?

The whole clause contains a platform or summary of evangelical truth. Of that all important truth, which ministers are to teach and preach; which the HOLY SPIRIT will own and accompany with his influence; and which is thereby made the power of GOD to the salvation of the hearers. He shall convince the world *of sin*; of the guilty and miserable state, in which all mankind are plunged by transgression, in which every individual person continues, so long as he is destitute of a interest in CHRIST; so long as he believes not in HIM, who died upon the cross, and is gone to the FATHER -- Of *righteousness*; he shall reveal the REDEEMER'S most perfect and magnificent righteousness in their hearts. That righteousness, which satisfies the justice of the MOST HIGH, and brings complete redemption to transgressors. Testimony, not barely that he is holy, but, such was *Adam* in paradise; not barely that he is holy, such are angels in heaven; shall the eternal CREATOR, even after his humiliation unto death, have nothing of a testimony, than a set of mere creatures? Yes, verily, the HOLY GHOST will convince the world, that CHRIST'S righteousness is the grand and capital blessing, which the prophets foretold; and which not only fulfils, but magnifies the law. That it is the righteousness, the very righteousness of the incarnate JEHOVAH; and that it renders every soul, to whom it is imputed, unblameable, unreprouable, complete. Glorious office this! worthy to be the object of the almighty COMFORTER'S agency! in performing which, he administers strong consolation -- Then he shall convince of *judgment*. Shall condemn and cast out the prince of this world, introducing a most happy change into the heart and life. Shall begin and carry on the work of grace, sanctification, obedience. And all, through the joyful knowledge, together with the personal appropriation, of this justifying righteousness.

That we might be made the righteousness of GOD in him. Which cannot be intrinsically, but must be imputatively.—This interpretation *Aspasio* establishes, attempts at least to establish, from the tenour of the context; from the apostle's antithesis; and from several venerable names. But what are all these to Mr. *Wesley*? No more than the arrow and the spear to *Leviathan*. Nay, not so much. That scaly monster esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood. But Mr. *Wesley*, cased in his own self-sufficiency, esteemeth all the aforementioned evidences, as mere nothings. He totally disregards them. Reason, grammar, precedents, are eclipsed by his bare negative; and vanish into an insignificance, not worthy of notice.

When *Aspasio*, supported by such great authorities, says, this cannot be intrinsically, but must be imputatively. Mr. *Wesley*, supported by his greater self, replies, "Both the one and the other."—But does he duly advert to the apostle's subject, or follow the clue of the context? The subject is reconciliation to GOD, justification before GOD, or that, whatever it be, which is implied in not imputing trespasses. The context intimates, that intrinsic holiness is not yet taken into consideration, but is reserved for the next chapter. There the apostle exhorts the *Corinthians*, not to receive this infinitely rich grace of free justification, in vain; but to shew its efficacy, to shew its excellency, and recommend it to the unbelieving world, by an unblameable conversation, *giving no offence in any thing*.

Justification then is the only point, which the apostle, in this passage, considers; and justification is the fruit of imputed righteousness solely, not of inherent righteousness in any degree. This we must allow, unless we prefer the impositions of *Trent*, before the confession of our Church. "Faith says unto us, it is not I that take away your sins, but CHRIST only; and to him only I send you for that purpose, forsaking therein all your good words, thoughts, and works, and only putting your trust in CHRIST." Thus speaks and thus teaches our reformed Church.—"If any one say, that man is justified only by the imputation of CHRIST's righteousness, or only by the remission of sins, without the co-operation

" of inherent grace and holy love, let him be accursed *." Thus dogmatizes, and thus anathematizes, that mother of falsehoods.—Choose now your side. For my part, I renounce and abjure the proud and iniquitous decree. If you persist in your present opinion, there will be an apparent harmony between yourself and *Rome*, but an essential difference between yourself and *Aspasio*.

" GOD through him, first accounts, and then makes us " righteous." How? Does GOD account us righteous, before he makes us so? Then is judgment is not according to truth. Then he reckons us to be righteous, when we are really otherwise. Is not this the language of your doctrine? This the unavoidable consequence of your notion? But how harsh, if not horrid, does it sound in every ear? Is not this absolutely irreconcilable with our ideas of the supreme BEING, and equally incompatible with the dictates of scripture? There we are taught that *GOD justifieth the ungodly*.—Mark the words. *The ungodly* are the objects of the divine justification. But can he account the ungodly righteous? impossible!—How then does he act? He first makes them righteous†.—After what manner? By imputing to them the righteousness of his dear SON.—Then he pronounces them righteous, and most truly. He treats them as righteous, and most justly. In short, their he absolves them from guilt; adopts them for his children; and makes them heirs of his eternal kingdom.—In the grand transaction, thus regulated, mercy and truth meet together. All proceeds in the most harmonious and beautiful consistency, with the several attributes of GOD; with his whole revealed will; and with all his righteous law.

" The righteousness which is of GOD by faith, is both " imputed and inherent"—Then it is like interweaving linen and woollen; the motley mixture, forbidden to the

* *Si quis dicent, hominem justificari, vel sola imputatione justitiam, vel sola remissione peccatorum, excludit gratiam & charitatem, anathema esto.* *Dei. vi. Cap. 11.*

† Agreeably to this, our Church speaks: In justification of us just we are made just before GOD; and adds, this is the living rock and foundation of eternal religion. *Hom. of justification.*

Israelites. Or rather, like weaving a thread of the finest gold, with a hempen cord, or a spider's web. — The righteousness which is of GOD, is perfect, con unmate, everlasting. Not so inherent righteousness, your own self being judge, and your own pen being witness — In the righteousness which is of GOD the apostle desires to be found, before the great and terrible tribunal of the LORD. His own righteousness, or the righteousness which is inherent, he abandons, as absolutely improper for this great purpose. Being no more fitted to give him boldness, at the day of judgment, than dung and filth are fit to introduce a person with credit and dignity, to court. — The righteousness which is of GOD, is unknown to reason; is revealed from heaven; and without the works of the law. Whereas, the righteousness inherent, is discoverable by reason; was known to the Heathens; and consist in a conformity of heart and life to the precepts of the law. — By the latter, we act, we obey, and offer our spiritual services to GOD. By the former, we work nothing; we render nothing unto GOD; but only receive of his grace.

They are, therefore, not the same, but totally distinct. To blend and confound them, betrays unskillfulness in the word of righteousness, derogates from the honor of CHRIST, and tends to cherish a legal frame, or what the scripture calls, *a spirit of bondage*. — If you would approve yourself a workman, that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth, thus you should you speak, and thus you should write; the righteousness of GOD is always imputed. But being imputed, it produces the righteousness inherent. Being justified by the former, saved from hell, and rendered meet for heaven; we are sanctified also, and disposed to love the LORD, who has dealt so bountifully with us. And if to love, then to worship him; to serve him; to imitate him.

My faith lives on both the *meritorious life* and *atoning death* of CHRIST. "Here we clearly agree." — How can you clearly agree, either with Aspasio, or with yourself; or with common sense? — How with Aspasio? Since you question, in direct contrariety to his sentiments, whether the death of CHRIST be not the whole of what St. Paul stiles

the obedience of ONE.—How with *yourself*? For, did you not declare, a little while ago, that fallen man “is not justified by perfect obedience?” Is not CHRIST’s meritorious life perfect obedience? If your faith fixes on this perfect obedience, is it not for the purpose of justification?—How with *common sense*? Since you suppose, that the “scripture ascribes the whole of our salvation to the death of CHRIST,” so entirely ascribes it to the death of CHRIST, that “there was no need of his fulfilling the moral law, in order to purchase redemption for us;” what reason, or shadow of reason can you have, to fix upon what we call the merit of his life?—If, what you suppose and affirm, be true, there was no kind of meritorious efficacy in his life. His life, and all his labours, were, in this respect, a mere superfluity. Salvation might have been obtained, and redemption purchased, without their concurrence. Therefore, to fix upon them, is to fix upon a phantom, and to rest your hopes upon a *thing of nought*.

But stay. Am I not repeating the misconduct, which proved so fatal to the famous Earl of *Warwick* and his forces? At the battle of *Gladmore*, while the scale of victory hung in suspense, they saw a considerable body of troops advancing. Supposing them to be enemies, the bowmen made a general discharge, and galled them with their arrows. But they soon perceived their mistake; that they had been opposing their friends, and annoying their allies. Perhaps, by this time, you are become my ally. You may have seen your errors; may have corrected your notions; saying, in ratification of both, “we agree.”

That is, “I would no longer exclude the meritorious obedience of CHRIST. But this, together with his atoning death, I look upon as the only cause of my justification.—This I call his righteousness; and this, being imputed to me, becomes my plea, my portion, and rational foundation for my everlasting felicity.—This I receive by faith. Which I now look upon, not as constituting any part of my recommendation, but only as receptive of the fulness, laid up for me in CHRIST.—Though the law of

“ works saith, do and live ; I am now made sensible, that
 “ the law of faith says, be verily persuaded, that CHRIST
 “ is sufficient for thy acceptance, without any doing of thy
 “ own at all.—Since CHRIST is given to me, in the sacred
 “ record, given to me, as a sinner, to be received, with
 “ out any conditions, I joytully accept the gift. I am sa-
 “ tisfied with his doing and suffering. They are divinely
 “ excellent, and infinitely sufficient. I neither wish for,
 “ nor think of, any thing more, to obtain my complete sal-
 “ vation.—This way of salvation effectually excludes boast-
 “ ing ; and, at the same time, produces those desirable
 “ effects—that love of GOD ; that delight in his perfecti-
 “ ons ; that conformity to his will ; which the law of works
 “ requires in vain.”

If this is what you mean, by “ we agree,” I would seal and ratify the agreement, with the last wish, and the last word, of the celebrated father *Paul*, *Esto perpetua*. Be this the case, and you shall have, not only the right hand of fellowship, but the right hand of pre-eminence.—Only I crave one favour in return. Dismiss those injurious insinuations, which cause your readers to suspect, that *Aspasio* considers the meritorious life of CHRIST, separate from his atoning death. Whereas, he affirms them to be inseparable like the correspondence of motion between the two eyes. Try, if you can make one of your eyes move to the right, while the other wheels off to the left. When you have done this, then, and not till then, may you have some reasonable pretence for these your suggestions.

Alas! *Quantú de spe uacuit!* I find my hopes were too sanguine. We are not come to the desired coalition. In this very paragraph, you begin to fly off. By talking of imputed righteousness, you tell us, “ we are exposed to an exceeding great hazard ; even the hazard of living and “ dying without holiness.”—Pray, Sir, have you seen a little piece, written up on this subject by the Rev. Mr. *Witherspoon*? If you have not, let me recommend it to your perusal. In case you are ignorant of that powerful influence, which justification through the righteousness of CHRIST, has upon sanctification and true holiness, from this treatise you may learn some valuable knowledge. In case the au-

thor of this treatise is mistaken, in maintaining the indissoluble connection of justification with true godliness; and the never-failing efficacy of the REDEEMER's righteousness, to bring forth willing obedience in the believer; you may have an opportunity of rectifying his sentiments. You may give us, in your next publication, a preservative, not only against *unsettled*, but against *unsound* notions in religion.

Theron, speaking of *gems*, says, when nicely polished, and prodigal of their lustre, they stand candidates for a seat, on the *virtuous* fair one's breast.—This displeases Mr. *Wesley*. Would he then have gems placed on the *vicious* or lascivious breast? Or would he have them put to no use at all; but buried in darkness? Did the ALMIGHTY pour such brilliancy upon them, only that they might be consigned over to obscurity? Did he not rather array them, with lustre and with charms, that they might display something of his own brightness; incite his rational creatures to admire his transcendent excellency, and teach his faithful people to apprehend the emphasis of that animating promise, *they shall be mine, in the day that I make up my jewels*.

"I can't reconcile this with St. *Paul*. He says, *not with pearls*: by a purity of reason, not with diamonds."—Do you rightly understand St. *Paul*? Don't you dwindle his manly and noble idea, into a meanness and littleness of sense? Such as befits the superstitious and contracted spirit of a hermit, rather than the generous and exalted temper of a believer; *who stands fast in the liberty, wherewith CHRIST hath made him free*?—Our LORD says not, they that are *splendidly apparelled*, are apparelled unsuitably to christianity, or in a manner inconsistent with the fear of GOD. But they *are in king's courts*, and their dress is adapted to their station.—Neither does St. *Paul* forbid the *use* of pearl, or costly array, when a person's circumstances will afford them, and his situation in life may require them. He rather cautions against the *abuse*, against looking upon these glittering things, as any part of their true dignity, on which they value themselves, or by which they would be recom-

mended to others. The word is not *put on**, nor *wear*†, but *adorn*. “Let them not place their excellency in such mean distinctions; no, nor covet to distinguish themselves, by these superficial decorations; but rather by the substantial ornaments of real godliness, and good works.—Which will render both them and their religion truly amiable.”

The Apostle Peter observes the same propriety of speech, and the same correctness of sentiment. *Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of wearing of gold, or plaiting the hair, or putting on of apparel.* Was this an absolute prohibition of the several particulars mentioned, it would forbid all kind of cloathing, or the putting on of any apparel. Take the passage in your rigorous sense, and it concludes as forcibly against garments, as against ornaments; we must even go naked, and lay aside our cloathes, as well as our gems. “Christians, scorn to borrow your recommendations from the needle, the loom, or the toyshop. This may be the fashion of a world. But let your embellishments, or that which beautifies and distinguishes your character, be of a superior nature. Let it be internal; not such as the sheep have wore, or the silk-worms spun; but such as is peculiar to the immortal mind, or *the hidden man of the heart*. Let it be substantial; not such as the moth corrodes, or such as perishes in using; but *that which is not corruptible*. Which being planted on earth, will be transplanted into heaven, and being sown in time, will flourish to eternity.—Let it be that adorning, whose excellency is unquestionable, and whose praise is of GOD, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. Which will render you, not indeed like the grantees of the earth, but like the SON of the HIGHEST. Shewing, that you are united to him; interested in him; and partakers of his divine nature.”

“In an that good perceive, that you are too favorable, both to *the desire of the flesh, and the desire of the eye*.”—I rather think, Mr. Wesley is too censorious of others, and too

* Mark vi. 9.

† Matt. xi. 8.

indulgent to himself. Why may not Theron wear his richly embossed gold watch, and his lady use her golden buckle set with diamonds, as well as you and I wear a silver buckle *, or make use of our silver watch ? Why may not an Earl or a Countess †, put on their robes, sumptuous with embroidery, or their coronet, glittering with jewels, as inoffensively, as you and I put on a beaver-hat, or trail after us a pruella gown ? There is no necessity for this our spruceness. A fustian jacket would keep our backs warm, and a flannel cap our heads, as well as our more elegant array.—Methinks, therefore, we should either abstain from all needless finery in our own dress, or else forbear to censure it in others. Rather, we should all, in our respective stations, and according to our respective circumstances, use these things, ss not abusing them. Remembering, that the fashion of this world passeth away. Looking, therefore, for that city of the living GOD, *whose wall is of jasper, whose buildings are of pure gold, and whose foundations are garnished with all manner of precious stones.* But whose external splendor is infinitely surpassed by the glory of GOD, which lightens it, and by the presence of the LAMB, which is the light thereof. When we are blessed with clear apprehensions of this ineffable glory, which shall be revealed ; when we live under a delightful persuasion, that GOD hath given to us this eternal life ; gems will have but little lustre in our eye, and less and less allurements for our heart. All the pomp of this transient world will appear to us, as the palace of Versailles, or the gardens of Stowe, would appear to some superior being ; who, from an exalted station ather, should contemplate the terraqueous globe : and at

* That Mr. Wesley may not suspect I am pleading for self-indulgence, I will give him my word, that I have ne'er wore my silver buckles, since I was in mourning for his royal highness. Neither shall I have one uneasy thought, if I never put them on again.

† Should it be said, the persons, to whom St. Peter wrote, were in mean circumstances. Therefore such grandees are out of the question. I answer The persons to whom St. Peter wrote, were all christians to the very end of the world. Among these, though there may not be many great, nor many noble, yet, blessed be GOD, there are some.—And when these go to receive their celestial crowns, we truly, it will be said,

— *Uno abito non aspectu alter
dureat.*

one view take in its vast dimensions, its prodigious revolutions, and its most copious furniture.

“ You are a gentle casuist as to every self-indulgence, “ which a plentiful fortune can furnish.”—I would consider the end, for which these things were created ; and point out, and enforce, their proper improvements. They were created, not to tantalize, but to treat us ; not to ensnare, but to gratify us. Then they are properly improved, when we enjoy them with moderation, and render them instruments of usefulness. When they are regarded as pregnant tokens of our CREATOR's love, and act as endearing incitements of our gratitude.—What you call my casuistry, is built upon a maxim, which will never be controverted ; *Every creature of GOD is good, if received with thanksgiving.* It is nothing else, but an attempt to display what is affirmed in the former clause, and to enforce what is prescribed in the latter.

In the sixth letter, in the ninth, and in other parts, The-ron enumerates some of the finest productions, and most choice accommodations, which the earth, the air, the seas afford.— In imitation of the Apostle, who, in one sentence, expresses abundantly more, than my three volumes contain ; *HE giveth us all things richly to enjoy.*—In imitation of the Psalmist also, who, in several of his hymns, especially in *Psalm civ.* celebrates the profuse munificence of JEHIOVAH ; profuse, even in temporal blessings, and with regard to our animal nature.—Does our nature call for something to support it ? Here is bread which strengthens man's heart, and is the staff of his life. Does our nature go farther, and covet something to please it ? Here is wine that maketh glad the heart of man ; regaling his palate, and exhilarating his spirits. Is our nature yet more craving, and desirous of something to beautify it ? Here is oil, that maketh the face to shine. That the countenance may appear, both chearful and amiable. That gaiety may sparkle in the eye, while beauty glows in the cheek.—Now I cannot persuade myself, nor is all Mr. Weslev's rhetoric powerful enough to convince me, that it is any discredit, or any error, to follow such examples.

" But I mention the exquisite relish of *Turbot*, and the deliciousness of *Sturgeon*. And are not such observations beneath the dignity of a minister of CHRIST?" Mr. *Wesley* does not observe from whom these remarks proceed. Not from *Aspasio*, but *Theron*. To make *him* speak like a minister of CHRIST, or like a christian of the first rank, would be entirely out of character. It would have betrayed an utter ignorance, or a total disregard of *Horace's* rule;

Reddere personæ scit convenientia cuique.

However, I am willing to take all upon myself, and be responsible for the obnoxious sentiments. I would only ask, is any thing spoken of, which the ALMIGHTY has not made? and shall I think it beneath my dignity, to magnify the work of his hands? Is any thing spoken of, which the ALMIGHTY has not bestowed? and shall I think it a diminution of my character, to acknowledge the various gifts of his bounty? Has God most high thought it worthy of his infinite majesty, to endue the creatures with such pleasing qualities, as render them a delicious entertainment or our appetites? and shall I reckon it a mean unbecoming employ, to bear witness to this condescending indulgence of the DEITY?—Particularity in recounting benefits, is seldom deemed a fault. It comes under no such denomination, in my system of ethics. If Mr. *Wesley* has a better, in which neglect and insensibility are ranked among the virtues, I must undoubtedly, upon those principles, drop my plea. Where *they* are commendable, my conduct must be inexcusable, and if inexcusable, I fear, irreclaimable. For I shall never be ashamed to take a fish, a fowl, or a fruit in my hand, and say, "a present this, from our all-bountiful CREATOR! see its beauty, taste its sweetness, admire its excellency, and love and adore the great benefactor. To us he hath freely granted these, and other delights. Though he himself, in the days of his flesh, had gall to eat, and vinegar to drink."

" But the mentioning these in such a manner, is a strong encouragement of luxury and sensuality."—If, to enume

rate a *few* of these dainties *, be a strong encouragement to luxury, how much more, to create them *all*, and clothe them with such inviting properties, and recommend them by such delicate attractives?—But “the mentioning them in such “a manner.” What! is this an encouragement to sensuality? To mention them, as so many instances of divine beneficence, and so many motives to human gratitude? This, methinks, is the way to prevent the abuse of our animal enjoyments, and to correct their pernicious tendency. This is the way to endear their adorable GIVER, and render them incentives to love. And the love of GOD, is a better guard against luxury, a better preservative from sensuality, than all the rigid rules of the cloyster or monastery.

Upon the whole, however well affected Mr. Wesley may be to our civil, he seems to be a kind of malecontent, with regard to our spiritual liberties. Those I mean, which are consigned over to us, in the *Magna Charta* of the gospel.

We have liberty, through JESUS CHRIST, to use not one only, but every creature of GOD. And to use them in a *sanctified* manner, so that they shall not sensualize our affections, but refine and exalt them, by knitting our hearts more inseparably to their munificent CREATOR. According to that clause in the heavenly deed, *all things are yours*. This you would curtail and diminish.

We have liberty to look upon ourselves, as justified before GOD, without any works of our own; made perfectly righteous in his sight, without any personal obedience whatever. Entirely through our representative and surety, what he has suffered in our name and in our stead. According to those gracious declarations, *In the LORD I have righteousness*, and, *by the obedience of ONE shall many be made righteous*. This you will supersede and also abolish.

We have liberty to claim and receive this unspeakable privilege, without performing any conditions, or seeking any pre-requisites. Having no other qualification, than that of being lost sinners, and needing no other warrant,

* The Scripture calls them, *Royal Dainties*, Gen. xlix, 20.

than the divine grant, made and recorded in the word of the gospel. According to that most generous invitation, *Come buy wine and buy milk, without money and without price.* According to that most gratuitous concession, *Whoever will let him take of the water of life freely.* This you will clog and embarrass.

We have liberty, through our LORD's atonement, to look upon ourselves as made free from all guilt. To consider our sins, as absolutely blotted out, never to appear again, either to our utter condemnation, or to our least confusion.

The three first articles of the charge, I think, are made clear, too clear and undeniable, in the course of the preceding letters. Should you challenge me to prove the last, I refer you to your *seize sermon*. There you tell us, that the sins of true believers, as well as of unbelievers, will be brought to light, and exposed before the whole world, at the day of universal judgment.

Here, I must do the justice to acknowledge, that you have not, as in your epistolary animadversions on *Aspasio*, required your audience to assent, merely because you affirm. You attempt to establish your opinion by the authority of Solomon: *GOD shall bring every work into judgement, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* But you seem to forget, that the sins of the believer are things that are not. *CHRIST* has blotted out, as a thick cloud, our transgressions; yea, as a thin cloud, our sins*. Consider them as moral stains, or causes of defilement; they are washed away by the blood of *JESUS*. And surely the blood of *GOD*, must have as powerful an effect on our souls, as the waters of *Jordan* had upon *Naaman's* body †.

A

* *Job. xiv. 17.* *Nubes nubiis.* Thus *Houbigant* translates the words, and I think very justly. The first seems to denote an immense arrangement of clouds, covering the sky. The second signifies a look detached fragment, floating in the upper regions. The first, fixed like a vault, the last transient, like a fl. s. This simile diversifies the Prophet's image; and, instead of clouds, presents us with a beautiful gradation.

—Consider them as contracting guilt, or deserving punishment; they are vacated; they are disannulled; and, like the scape goat, dismissed into the pathless inaccessible wilderness, *when sought for, they shall not be found.*—Consider them in either of these respects, or under any other character, and they are, not only covered or secreted, but abolished. Just as the darkness of the night is abolished, by the splendor of this clear, serene, delightful morning.

The grand end which GOD proposes in all his favorable dispensations to fallen man, is to demonstrate the sovereignty of his grace. “Not so.”—Do you mean, Aspasio has not spoken so? That you have misrepresented his sense? Have clipped and disfigured his coin? If this is your meaning, you speak an undoubted truth. His words are, “To demonstrate the sovereigns, and advance the glory of his grace.” Why did you suppress the last clause? Was you afraid it would supply the deficiency, which you charge on Aspasio, and express the idea of imparting happiness? If so, your fears are just enough.—Why did you not take into consideration those texts of scripture, with which Aspasio confirms his tenet? Ought you not to have overthrown these testimonies, before you deny his doctrine? Otherwise you oppose your authority, to the decision of a Prophet and an Apostle.

Bring to our sight, if you can, the millstone, that is cast into the depths of the sea. Restore to its former consistence, the cloud that is dissolved in rain. Or find one dreg of filthiness in the new-fallen snow. Then may those iniquities be brought again into notice, which have been done away by the High Priest of our profession. Which have been expiated by the perfect, most effectual, and glorious oblation of himself.—His people, when rising from the bed of death, will *have no more conscience of sin* in themselves. They are fully and for ever free from the accusation of others. So free, that sin shall not so much as be mentioned unto them; no, nor even remembered by the LORD their GOD any more. They are made holy, unblameable, and unreprouable in his sight. And they shall be presented, at the great day, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.

Thus may we, and thus may our readers, be presented ! So shall we meet each other with comfort at the awful tribunal ; with joy amidst the angels of light, and with everlasting transport around the throne of the LAMB.—To promote this blessed event, is the sole aim of those remonstrances, and the unfeigned desire of

Rev. Sir, Your, &c.





LETTER XI.

REV. SIR,

MY last concluded with a sketch of our christian liberty, extracted from the *charter* of the gospel. We have liberty—to use all the creatures, and in a sanctified manner—to consider ourselves, as made perfectly righteous, through the obedience of CHRIST—to receive this grand prerogative, without performing any conditions—to look upon all our sins, as totally and finally done away, through the blood of JESUS.

Perhaps, you will ask; where is your liberty from the power of sin? Does not this come within the extent of your charter?—Most certainly. You injure our doctrine, if you deny it. We are undone irreparably, if we continue destitute of it. Every other immunity, without this crowning privilege, would be like the magnificent palace and the beautiful gardens of Pharaoh; while swarms of locusts filled them, with their loathed intrusion.

But observe, Sir; freedom from the dominion of sin, is the result of all the preceding blessings. By revealing these in our hearts, and CHRIST the author of them, the HOLY SPIRIT acts as the SPIRIT of liberty. You are a philosopher. You understand the theory of light. From the association of various rays, or the mixture of many *primitiue colours*, springs that first of elements, and best of mate-

rial gifts, *light*. So, from the union, and united enjoyment of all those heavenly treasures, springs that most desirable liberty, the *liberty of righteousness*—This is that truth, which makes us free. This is that knowledge, by which we are renewed after the image of HIM, that created us. And these are the exceeding precious promises, by which we are partakers of the divine nature.—Hence we are taught to love the LORD our GOD, and to delight in his adorable perfections. But they mean, they look with a smiling aspect upon us, and are unspeakably a nigh to us. Under such views, we say of sin, we say of all our evil and corrupt affections; *Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? And am I not grieved with those, that rise up against thee? I hate them with a perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.*

Our SAVIOUR's obedience. This phrase disgusts Mr. Wesley. Therefore he cries; "O say with the good Puritans, our SAVIOUR's *death and merit*."—Aspasio speaks with St. Paul; *by the obedience of our*.—He speaks with St. Peter; *faith in the righteousness of our GOD and SAVIOUR*.—He speaks with the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah; *in the LORD have I righteousness*; and *JEHOVAH is our righteousness*.—Having these precedents, he need not be very solicitous, who else is for him, or who is against him.

Though not very solicitous about this matter, he is somewhat surprised at your venement address; that you should exhort him so earnestly to "speak with the good old Puritans." Has not your Printer committed a mistake? Did not the clause stand thus in your manuscript? "With my good friends the *Arminians*." They indeed disapprove this expression. Because it is, when rightly understood, a dagger in the heart of their cause.—But as to the Puritans they are, one and all, on the contrary side. Their language is a perfect union with *Arminian's*. The glory in the meritorious obedience of their great MEDIATOR. They extol his imputed righteousness in almost every page; and pour contempt upon all other works, compared with their LORD's.—What will not an author affirm, who features

to affirm or insinuate that the Puritan writers disuse this manner of speaking? For my part, I know not any set of writers in the world, so eminently remarkable, for this very doctrine, and this very diction. I said, in a former letter, we would enquire into this particular. But the enquiry is quite unnecessary. It would be like *Uriel's* searching for the sun, while he stands in its orb, and is surrounded with its lustre.

"We swarm with *Antinomians*"—And we must swarm with persons, whose hearts are enmity against the law of God, so long as *your* tenets find acceptance. Who can delight in a law, which neither has been, nor can be fulfilled by them? Which bears witness against them, and is the ministration of death unto them? Testifying, like the hand-writing on Belshazzar's wall, *Thou art weighed in the balances, and found wanting*:—Whereas, when we see it fully satisfied on our behalf, by our SURETY's obedience; no longer denouncing a curse, but pronouncing us blessed; not pursuing us, like the avenger of blood, but opening a city of refuge, for the safety of our souls; we shall then be reconciled to its constitution and design. We shall then take pleasure in its precepts and prohibitions. We shall say with the Psalmist; *LORD, what love have I unto thy law! all the day long is my study in it.*

My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation—"Thy mercy which brings my salvation," says Mr. Wesley, in opposition to the sense, assigned by *Aspasio*.—Which sense has been vindicated already. I shall therefore not renew my arguments but only express my wonder.

As Mr. Wesley is a minister of the gospel, I wonder, that he should studiously set aside, what is the peculiarity and glory of the evangelical revelation. "Mercy which brings salvation," is what an unenlightened Jew might have preached; nay, what a more ignorant Heathen might have taught. But salvation through a divine righteousness as the adequate and meritorious cause thereof, is the distinguishing doctrine and the sovereign excellency of the gospel.

As Mr. Wesley is a sinner, I wonder, he should chuse to weaken the foundation of his own and our hope. Why

mercy alone? Is it not better to put our trust in mercy, erecting its throne on a propitiation, and thence holding forth the golden sceptre? By the obedience of IMMANUEL, the law is satisfied, as to its penalty; is fulfilled, as to its precept; and is in every respect, unspeakably magnified. This shews us the inexhaustible fountain of mercy, unsealed, and every obstruction to its free and copious flow, removed.

As Mr. Wesley is zealous for the honor of GOD, I wonder, he should not prefer that method of salvation, by which every divine attribute is most abundantly glorified. This is not done, by expecting pardon and acceptance from mercy alone; but by expecting and receiving them, through our REDEEMER'S righteousness and blood. Then we have a display, not only of infinite love, but of inflexible justice, and inconceivable wisdom. Here, they mingle their beams, and shine forth with united and eternal splendour.

Considering these things, I am still inclined to embrace *Aspasio's* interpretation of this, and such-like passages of scripture. Wherein salvation is ascribed to divine mercy, exercising through the obedience and death of CHRIST. Which shews as great a heightening, to the blessing, as the atmosphere gives to the rays of light, or as the light itself imparts to the scenes of creation.

Those divine treasures, which spring from the imputation of CHRIST'S righteousness. "Not a word of his atoning blood."—I wish, you would turn back to *Aspasio's* definition of this phrase, as it is laid down at the beginning of the conference; to be the ground-work of all the dialogues, and of all the letters. You will then perceive, that there is not a word of this kind, but CHRIST'S atoning blood is included in it. Without this, his righteousness could not be imputed.—Some people have a treacherous memory, and really forget things. Others have a perverted mind, and resolve not to regard them. Which of these is Mr. Wesley's case, I presume not to say; let his own conscience determine.

'Tis true, we love to speak of the righteousness of "CHRIST." Yet not because "it affords a fairer excuse for our own unrighteousness." For indeed it affords no

excuse at all. On the contrary, it renders unrighteousness quite inexcusable. Because it yields new and nobler motives to all holy obedience. But we love to speak of the righteousness of CHRIST, because it is the most comprehensive expression, and the grandest theme in the world.—The *most comprehensive expression*; as it denotes all that he has done and suffered, both his meritorious life, and his atoning blood.—The *grandest theme*. Consider all those blessings, which have been vouchsafed to GOD's people, before our SAVIOUR appeared on earth; add all the blessings, which will be vouchsafed, until the consummation of all things: consider all that good, which is comprised in a deliverance from the infernal hell; together with all that happiness, which is contained in the pangs, and glories of the heavenly state. All these to be enjoyed, through a boundless eternity, and by multitudes of redeemed sinners, numberless as the sands upon the sea shore. Then ask; what is the procuring cause of all? whence do these inestimable blessings proceed? from the righteousness, the sole righteousness of JESUS CHRIST.—Is it not then worthy to be uppermost in our thoughts, and foremost on our tongues? might not the very stones cry out, and reproach our insensibility, if we did not love to talk of this divinely precious righteousness?

Faith is a persuasion, that CHRIST has shed his blood *for me*, and fulfilled all righteousness *in my stead*. "I can by no means subscribe to this definition."—You might very safely subscribe to this definition, if you would suffer St. Peter to speak his genuine sentiments. Describing the faith of the primitive christians, he calls it, *faith in the righteousness*. He says nothing of the atoning blood. But does he therefore exclude it? he speaks of nothing but the justifying righteousness. And will you totally discard it? It is the central point in his faith, and shall it have no place in yours?—*Righteousness*, he assures us, was the object of the believer's faith, even that of our GOD and SAVIOUR, JESUS CHRIST. But how could this be the object of their faith, if it was not fulfilled in their stead? Or how

could they truly believe in this righteousness, if they did not regard it, as performed for them, and imputed to them?

"There are hundreds, yea thousands of true believers, who never once thought, one way or the other, of CHRIST's fulfilling all righteousness in their stead."—Then their faith is like the sight of the person, who saw men as trees walking. He saw them indeed, but very dimly, indistinctly, confusedly. And 'tis pity, but they were more thoroughly instructed unto the Kingdom of GOD.—Not one of those thousands, provided he fixes his hope wholly upon the merits of CHRIST, would reject this delightful truth, if it was offered, with scriptural evidence, to his understanding. Reject it! Never! He would joyfully embrace it, if offered, with that strong, but undeniable evidence; *CHRIST was made sin for us though he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of GOD in him.*

"You personally know many, who to this hour have no idea of CHRIST's righteousness."—Surely then it behoves you, as a lover of souls, and as an ambassador of CHRIST, to teach them the way of GOD more perfectly*. So doing, you will be employed much more suitably to your function, and much more profitably to your brethren, than in your present attempt, and defeat the designs of those, who endeavour to spread abroad the savour of this knowledge, in every place. And who, notwithstanding all that you personally know, must unalterably persist in their method. Which is, to regulate their definition of faith, not by the state of your supposed believers, but by the express declaration of the unerring word. And from this, they have authority to maintain, that faith in the imputed righteousness of CHRIST, is a fundamental principle to every believer, who has a proper understanding upon what foundation he is saved.

These your acquaintance, though they have no idea of CHRIST's righteousness, yet "have each of them a divine

* Mr. W. L. cannot say, what I teach a doctrine, which they disapprove? Since he himself has acknowledged it, has approved it; but he has done so at a distance, and not in the presence of the multitude.

"evidence and conviction, CHRIST *loved me, and gave himself for me.*"—In this case, don't you take rather too much upon you? have you then the apostolical gift of discerning spirits? if not, it will be impossible for you to know the man, exclusive of yourself, who is certainly possessed of this divine evidence. You may form a charitable judgment or a prevailing hope. Which seems to be the utmost you can warrantably claim with regard to others. And while you entertain this hope, we shall show it to indicate the benevolence of your heart, but cannot admit it as a proof of your point: that people may be full of faith and love, yet have no idea of CHRIST's righteousness.—We would also caution you to take heed, lest, through an immoderate fondness for increasing the number of your converts, you are led to deceive yourself and others, registering those as true believers, whom the LORD hath not registered. By this means you may be confirmed in your unscriptural notion, that the righteous fall away, and the faithful apostatize. Whereas, they who fall away, were righteous only in appearance, and they who apostatize, were no otherwise than professionally faithful. What you see drop from the sky, is not a star, but a meteor only.

Faith is the hand which receives all that is laid up in CHRIST—Aspasio expresses himself thus; CHRIST is a store-house of all good. Whatever is necessary to remove our guilt, whatever is expedient for renewing our nature, whatever is proper to fit us for the eternal fruition of GOD, all this is laid up in CHRIST. And all this is received by faith, for our application, use, and enjoyment.—To this Mr. Wesley subjoins a word of objection; but not in due season. Aspasio is displaying the efficacy of faith; Mr. Wesley's argument is levelled against the inflexibility of faith. However, as it is your favorite objection, it shall not be treated as an intruder. "If we shake shipwreck of the faith, how much s-e-ve-r is laid up in CHRIST, from that hour we receive nothing."

Have you never heard of the answer, which the Spartan states returned, to an insolent and barbarous embassy, from Philip of Macedon? You may read it, in the book you are

censuring ; and may receive it, and your other surmises of this nature. It was all comprised in that single monosyllable IF — A mere professor may make shipwreck of the doctrine of faith ; a true believer does not make shipwreck of the grace of faith. No, nor ever will, unless CHRIST'S intercession be made of none effect ; I have prayed, that such fail not.

288. Answered already, in Number 285.

Aspasio, describing the dreadful nature of the command, given to Abraham, says ; thy hands must lift the deadly weapon ; thy hands must point it to the beloved brother, thy own hands must urge its way, through the gashing veins and the shivering flesh, till it be plunged in the throbbing heart.—“ Are not these descriptions far too strong ? ” This is submitted to the judgment of the reader. I would only observe, that the more strongly the horrors of the tremendous deed are represented, the more striking will the difficulty of the duty appear. Consequently, the more efficacious and triumphant the power of faith.—“ May not these descriptions occasion unprofitable reasonings in many readers ? ” What unprofitable reasonings may be occasioned, I do not pretend to guess. But the just and natural reflection, arising from the consideration of such a circumstance, is ; What has faith wrought ? It purifies and exalts the affections. It invigorates and ennobles the soul. Makes it bold to undertake, and strong to execute, every great and heroic work. I see, therefore, it is not in vain, that the scripture so frequently inculcates faith ; lays so remarkable a stress upon faith, and places it in the very front of all christian duties.” This is the victory that overcometh the world, overcometh self, overcometh all things.

How could he (*Abraham*) justify to the world ? Not at all.—True ; not to the unbelieving world. They will argue, as Mr. *Wesley* on another occasion. “ What ! stab his son, his best-beloved, his only son to the heart ? Could the GOD of goodness command such a piece of barbarity ? Impossible ! I could sooner be a deist, yea an atheist, than I could believe this. It is less absurd to deny the very being of a GOD, than to make him an almighty tyrant.”—

But to the believing world, who fear the LORD, and hearken to the voice of his servants, *Abraham's* conduct will never stand in need of a vindication. By them it will be highly extolled, and greatly admired. It will be an undeniable demonstration of the reality and sincerity of his faith; of its very superior elevation, and inconvincible strength.

You take the direct and certain way to obtain substantial comfort. The righteousness of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, after which you enquire, about which you are solicitous, is a never-failing source of consolation. Thus *Aspasio* writes to *Theron*—"What I without the atonement?" cries Mr. Wesley. To which he adds, in a following paragraph; so the death of CHRIST is not so much "as named." This puts me in mind of an objection, no very formidable one, made against that introductory exhortation to the common prayer, dearly beloved brethren, so then, said a candid examiner, *roman* have no part in your worship. They are not so much as named. But I forbear. If you are not ashamed of repeating, I am ashamed of refuting, so frequently refuting such an empty cavil. And, I believe, the reader is tired with us both.

306. I have no great objection to your alteration of *Aspasio's* comment. Suppose, we compromise matters, and consider the oil, poured on *Aaron's* head, and emptying itself from *Zechariah's* olive-tree, as typical both of the merits and the SPIRIT of CHRIST. Which, like light and heat in the sun, are indissolubly connected. Or, to make use of a sacred illustration, are like the living creatures and the wheels in *Ezekiel's* vision. When the living creatures went, the wheels went by them. When the living creatures were lift up from the earth, the wheels were lift up. Whither soever the former were to go, the latter went also.—For the sake of obliging Mr. Wesley, I call this a compromise.—But if he can prevail on himself to read the paraphrase on the two passages, without prepossession, he will find this association of senses anticipated by *Aspasio*.

Has the law demand, says *Aspasio*? It must go to CHRIST for satisfaction. From which you draw this injurious consequence, "then I am not obliged to love my

"neighbour. CHRIST has satisfied the demand of the "law for me." This objection has already received an answer.

I shall therefore content myself with shewing, why I call your conclusion injurious. Because, like the deaf adder, it stoppeth the ear, against my own explication of my own phrase. A note is added, on purpose to limit its sense, and obviate your misrepresentation. This you totally disregard, and argue as if no such precaution was used.—The note informs you, that the law—the commanding law is satisfied with nothing less than perfect obedience, and the broken law insists upon condign punishment. Now if it must not, for satisfaction to both these demands, go to CHRIST our divine husband, where will it obtain any such thing? Who is able to give it, among all the children of *Adam*?

However, lest we offend, needlessly offend any reader; I promise, that in case the providence of GOD and the favor of the public call for a new edition, *Aspas o* shall alter his language. Thus the paragraph shall stand; "Does the
"law demand perfect purity of nature, and perfect obedi-
"ence of life; It must go to HIM for satisfaction. Do
"we want grace, and glory, and every good gift? We
"may look to HIM, for a supply. To HIM, in whom it
"hath pleased the FATHER, that all truth should
"dwell."

For all this people—with phrase Mr. Wesley is chagrined. This he will not suffer to pass without animadversion. Though he must know, if prejudice has not blinded his understanding, that it is pure scripture. Why does he not shew the same dissatisfaction, with the angel that appeared unto *Joseph*, and with *Zachariah* the baptist's father? The former of whom says; he shall save *his people* from their sins. The latter declares; he shall give knowledge of salvation unto *his people*, by the remission of their sins. Why does he not put the same question unto them and draw the same inference upon them? "But what becomes of all
"other people?"—Sometimes Mr. Wesley is so attached to the scriptures, that nothing will please him, but scriptural expressions. Here he is so wedded to self-opinion, that even scriptural expressions will not pass current, when they seem to thwart his own notions.

For *all his people*—from this expression, though used by a prophet, authorised by an angel, and to be found in many places of scripture, Mr. *Henry* deduces some very offensive and dreadful consequences. So dreadful, that he “would sooner be a *Turk*, or *Deist*, yea an *Atheist*, than he could believe them.”—My dear Sir, let me give you a word of friendly advice, before you turn *Turk*, or *Deist*, or *Atheist*—viz., that you first become an *honest* man. They will all drown you, if you go over to their party, destitute of common honesty.

Metthink, I hear you saying, with some emotion; what do you mean by this advice? Or what relation has this to the subject of our present enquiry?—A pretty near relation. Out of zeal to demolish the doctrine of election, you scruple not to overleap the bounds of integrity and truth.—Most serious still! I know not, what you aim at.—Then be pleased to review a passage, in your book on *original sin*; where you have thought proper to make a quotation from my dialogues. It relates to that great doctrine of the gospel, CHRIST becoming the representative and federal head of sinners. Upon this occasion Aspasio says; “as Adam was a public person, and acted in the stead of all mankind, so CHRIST was a public person, and acted in behalf of *all this people*. As Adam was the first general representative of *this kind*, CHRIST was the second and last.” Here, you substitute the word *mankind*, instead of *this kind*; and thereby lead the reader to suppose, that Aspasio considers our glorious representative, as standing in this capacity to the whole human race; than which nothing can be more injurious to the sense of his words.

I at first thought it might possibly be the effect of inadvertency. But could a person of Mr. *Wesley's* discernment, allow himself to nod over a passage, which he knew to be of a critical and controverted import?—Perhaps, it might be the Printer's fault; an error of the press. I would willingly have admitted one of these extenuating circumstances, till I came to the bottom of the page. Where to my great astonishment, I found the following words, inclosed within the marks of the same quotation, and ascribed to Aspasio. “All these expressions demonstrate, that Adam

" (as well as CHRIST) was a representative of *all mankind*." Then I could no longer forbear crying out; *there is treachery, O Antichrist!* a false quotation, not made only, but repeated, cannot be owing to negligence, but must proceed from design. And this, I should think, can never be defended; no, nor with a good grace excused, by Mr. *Wesley's* most devoted admirers. A studious alteration of our words, and an evident perversion of their meaning, are defensible by no arguments, are excusable on no occasion.

Quite inexorable this practice. And is not your language equally offensive? Is not your conclusion very precipitate? When you suppose *Aspasio*, though using the words of scripture, yet representing GOD, as "an almighty tyrant?"—Such, you had better forbear such horrid and shrieking expressions. Especially, as you cannot deny, that many passages in scripture, seem at least to countenance this of noxious to us. As you very well know, that many persons, eminent for their learning and exemplary in their lives, have written in defence of it, and bled for the confirmation of it. As we have proofs more than a few, that you are far from being infallible in your judgment, yea, far from being invincible in your opinion. Witness your former notions of matrimony: witness the character you formerly gave of the *Moravian* brethren: and the esteem which you once had, for the mystics, and their writings.—Considering yourself, therefore, it would better become you to be diffident on such a subject, and say, "That which I know not, LORD teach thou me." And I imagine, it can never become you, on any subject whatever, to break out into such language, as ought not to be named among christians: ought to have no place, but in the bottomless pit.—This is an admonition, which, while I suggest to you, Sir, I charge on myself.

The three following paragraphs relate to a doctrine, which you are fond to attack, and which *Aspasio* studiously declines. It constitutes no part of his plan. It forms not so much as the out-works. Be it demolished or established, the grand privilege, and the invaluable blessing, of justification through the righteousness of CHRIST, remains

unchaken, stands immovable.—In applying this to ourselves, we proceed neither upon universal nor particular redemption, but only upon the divine grant, and the divine invitation. We assure ourselves of present and eternal salvation, through this perfect righteousness, not as persons *elect*, but as persons, *warranted* by the word of GOD; bound by the command of GOD; and *led* by the SPIRIT of GOD—Therefore, while you are encountering this doctrine, I would be looking unto JESUS; he viewing the glory of my LORD; contemplating HIS perfection, and my own completeness in HIM.

If I depart, for a moment, from this delightful object, it is only to touch upon one of your remonstrances. You suppose, that, according to the *Calvinistic* scheme, GOD denies what is necessary for present comfort and final acceptance, even to some who sincerely seek it. This is contrary to scripture, and no less contrary to the doctrine of the opposers. However, to confirm yourself in this misapprehension, you ask, “Would you deny it to any, if it were in your power?”—To shew the error of such a sentiment, and the fallacy of such reasoning, I shall just mention a recent melancholy fact.

News is brought, that the *Prince George* man of war, Admiral *Brouncker*'s own ship, is burnt, and sunk, and above four hundred souls, that were on board, perished. Six hours, the flames prevailed; while every means was used, to preserve the ship and crew; but all to no purpose. In the mean time, shrieks and groans, bitter meanings, and piercing cries, were heard from every quarter. Raving, despair, and even madness presented themselves, in a variety of forms. Some ran to and fro distracted with terror, not knowing what they did, or what they should do. Others jumped over board, from all parts; and, to avoid the pursuit of one death, leaped into the jaws of another. Those unhappy wretches, who could not swim, were obliged to remain upon the wreck, though flakes of fire fell upon their bodies. Soon the masts went away, and killed numbers.

Those who were not killed, thought themselves happy, to get upon the floating timber. Nor yet were they safe; for the fire, having communicated itself to the guns, which were loaded and shotted, they swept multitudes from this their last refuge.—What say you, Sir, to this dismal narrative? Does not your heart bleed? Would you have stood by, and denied your successor, if it had been in your power to help? Would you not have done your utmost, to prevent the fatal catastrophe? Yet the LORD saw this extreme distress. He heard their piteous moans. He was able to save them, yet withdrew his assistance. Now, because, you would gladly have succoured them if you could, and GOD ALMIGHTY could, but would not send them aid; you will therefore conclude, that *you* are above your LORD, and that *your* loving kindness is greater than his? I will not offer to charge any such consequences upon you. I am persuaded you abhor the thought.

"The wedding garment here means holiness."—Thus saying, you depart from Bengelius, for whom you profess so high a regard. Bengelius overlooks your exposition, and gives his vote for Aspasio's. *Hæc vestis est justitæ CHRISTI.* Awed by so venerable an authority, you have admitted it, into your expository notes, yet will not allow Aspasio to admit it, into his discourse with Theron. These are your words; "The wedding garment; that is, the righteousness of CHRIST, first imputed, then implanted." Which, by the way, is not perfectly accurate, not according to the language of the gospel. The gospel distinguishes between the righteousness of CHRIST, and our own righteousness. That which is imputed, goes under the former, that which is implanted, under the latter denomination.

However, let us consider the circumstances of the case, and we shall find, that our common favourite Bengelius has ability and reason on his side. The guests mentioned in this parable, consisted of poor outcasts, collected from highways and hedges. Now we cannot suppose, that in such a condition, and coming at a minute's warning, should be able to furnish themselves with a dress of

their own, suitable to the grand occasion. Here then personal holiness is put out of the question.—But we must suppose, (which is conformable to the Eastern custom) that the king had ordered his servants, to accommodate each guest from the royal wardrobe. That each might have this additional token of his sovereignty's favour, and all might be arrived in a manner, becoming the magnificent solemnity. This exactly corresponds with the nature of impured righteousness.

Farther; the banquet you will readily allow, is the pardon of sin, and peace with GOD, the divine SPIRIT, and eternal life. From all which, uniting their happy influence true holiness springs. To say, that holiness is the wedding garment, necessary for our introduction to this banquet, favours of absurdity; like saying holiness is necessary to holiness—it is absolute legality; for it makes the performance of all duties, the way to the REDEEMER'S grace—it implies an impossibility; the sinner, that can exercise holiness, before he receives CHRIST and his SPIRIT, is like the dead man, who arises and walks, before he is restored to life.

“Barely to demonstrate his sovereignty.” The world *barely* is not used by *Aspasia*. But it gives another specimen of Mr. Wesley's integrity, in stating truth, and doing justice to his opposers.—It is not said, the sole, but the *grand end*. Therefore, would any unprejudiced person conclude, there must be some other, though inferior purpose. No, says Mr. Wesley; hence I infer, that it was *merely* to demonstrate his sovereignty. Do you not? Even your inference is of a piece with the quotation, *that* as valid, as *this* is faithful.

“Barely to demonstrate his sovereignty,” is a principle of action fit for the great Turk, not for the King of GOD. Such a fraudulent quotation I have not often seen, nor, in the critical reviewers. To mark the sentence with commas, and thereby assign it to *Aspasia*, is really a master piece, especially, after you have thrust in the word *but*, and lopped off the word *grace*. You have treated the passage worse than *Nabush* King of *Babylon*, treated the ani-

messengers of *David*. They were ashamed to shew their faces, under such marks of abuse and disgrace. I am no less ashamed of the clause, as you have mangled and disguised it. But restore it to its true state; let it wear its native aspect; then see what is blameable, or what is offensive in it.

The grand end, which GOD proposes, in all his favourable dispensations to fallen man, is, to demonstrate the sovereignty, and advance the glory of his grace.—The *glory*, that it may appear rich, unbounded, and infinitely surpassing, all we can wish or imagine.—The *sovereignty*, that it may appear free, undeserved, and absolutely independent on any goodness in the creature.—That sinners may receive it, without waiting for any amiable qualities, or performing any recommending conditions.—That, when received, it may stop the mouth of boasting; may cut off all pretensions of personal merit; and teach every tongue to say, *not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name be the praise.*

And should we not greatly rejoice in this method of the divine procedure? That the LORD orders all things relating to our salvation, *to the praise of the glory of his grace*? Can any thing be more honorable to our nature, or more transporting to our souls? Can any thing so firmly establish, or so highly exalt our hopes? Angels, principalities, and powers; all intellectual creatures, in all ages, and all worlds, are to look unto us, unto us men they are to look, for the most consummate display of GOD's grace. Our exaltation and felicity are to be the mirror, in which the wondering Cherubim and Seraphim will contemplate the superabundant goodness of JEHIOVAH. How great must that honor and that happiness be, which are intended to exhibit the fullest, fairest, brightest view of GOD's infinitely glorious grace! how sure must that honor and happiness be, which are so intimately connected with the glory of the omnipotent King! which can no more fail of their accomplishment, than the amiable attributes of GODHEAD can be stripped of their lustre!

GOD is a boundless ocean of good. "Nay, that ocean is far from boundless, if it wholly passes by nine tenths

"of mankind."—What, if it had passed by *all* mankind, as it certainly did all the devils, would it have been the less boundless on that account? I wish, methinks, you would study the evil of sin no more, and not so frequently obtrude upon us a subject, of which neither you nor I seem to be masters. Then we should neither have hard thoughts of GOD, nor high thoughts of ourselves.

You cannot suppose, GOD would enter into a fresh covenant, with an *insolent* and *attainted* creature. There are *Aspasio's* words. To which Mr. Wesley replies; "I both suppose and know he did." *Satis cum imperio*. Then he pleased, Sir, to shew us, *where* the almighty entered into a covenant with fallen *Adam*; for of him we are speaking. Produce the original deed; at least favour us with a transcript. And we will take your word, when it is backed with such authority.

GOD made the new covenant with CHRIST, and charged him with the performance of the conditions. "I deny both these assertions." And what is your reason for this denial? Is it deduced from scripture? Nothing like it. It is founded on the nature of things? No attempt is made towards it. But you yourself affirm, that these assertions, "are the central point, wherein *Catholicism* and *Antinomianism* meet." Or, in other words, they tend to establish, what you dislike; and to overthrow, what you have taught. This is all the cause, which you assign for your denial. I cannot but wish, that, whenever I engage in controversy, my adversary may be furnished with such arguments.

You deny the assertions now. But don't you forget, what you allowed and maintained a little while ago? when you yourself, adopting a passage from *Theron* and *Aspasio*, called CHRIST "a federal head?"—Pray, what, is a federal head, but a person with whom a covenant is made, in behalf of himself and others? Here your judgment was according unto truth. Fit, perfectly fit for such an office, is CHRIST; whose life is all his own, who is able to merit, and mighty to save. But absolutely unfit for it, utterly incapable of it, is fallen man; whose life is forfeited, whose moral ability is lost, and whose very nature is enmity against GOD.

I have made a covenant with my chosen.—“Namely, with *David my servant*.” True; with *David* as in **CHRIST**, or rather as a type of **CHRIST**. You cannot be ignorant, that **CHRIST** is called by this very name.—The **LORD**, speaking by the prophet *Ezekiel*, says, *I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David*—Was *David* beloved*? **CHRIST** was incomparably more so—Was *David* **GOD**’s chosen one? **CHRIST** was so likewise, and in a far sublimer sense, and for infinitely more momentous purposes.—Was *David* **GOD**’s servant? So was **JESUS CHRIST**; and, by his services, brought unspeakably greater honor, to the **LORD** his **GOD**, than all kings on earth, and all the princes of heaven.—Several parts of this psalm, *must* be applied to **CHRIST**; and if several of them must, the principal of them *may* and *ought*.

He will wash you in the blood, which atones, and invest you with the righteousness, which justifies. “Why should you thus put asunder continually what **GOD** has joined?” How difficult is it, to please *Mr. Wesley*! when *Aspasio* spoke of **CHRIST**’s righteousness, without particularly mentioning his blood, you said it was better to mention them both together; it behoved us, never to name the former, without the latter. Yet here, when both are mentioned, and the particular use of each is specified, you complain of it as putting asunder what **GOD** has joined, which, in truth, is no disjoining, but an illustration and amplification of the unsearchable riches of **CHRIST**.

GOD himself, at the last day, pronounces them righteous, because they are interested in the obedience of the **REDEEMER**. “Rather, because they are washed in his blood, and renewed by his **SPIRIT**.” **GOD** will justify them in the last day, in the very same way, whereby he justified them in this world; namely, because they are interested in the obedience of the **REDEEMER**. As for their renewal by the **SPIRIT**, though it will then be perfect, yet it will be no cause of their acquittal, but the pri-

* *Beloved*. This is the meaning of *David* in Hebrew.

vilege of those who are acquitted.—A proof of this, at least
 an attestation of it, the world has received from your own
 pen. "For neither our own inward nor outward righte-
 "ousness is the ground of our justification. Holiness of
 "heart as well as holiness of life, is not the cause, but the
 "effect of it. The sole cause of our acceptance with God,
 "is the righteousness and death of CHRIST, who fulfilled
 "GOD's law, and died in our stead." Excellent senti-
 ments! in these may I ever abide! to these may you also
 return!



